, Augus/Life of Charlotte Bront
orth College Library

B 035

[redacted]

PR
4168
B5

14,027

[redacted]

te Duc

DISCARD

"Great Writers."

EDITED BY

PROFESSOR ERIC S. ROBERTSON, M.A.

LIFE OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

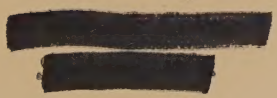
LIFE

OF

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, 1816-1855

BY

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL



LONDON
WALTER SCOTT
24 WARWICK LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW
1887

(*All rights reserved.*)

NOTE.

THE life of Charlotte Brontë has been written once for all by Mrs. Gaskell; but as no criticism of Miss Brontë's novels is possible apart from the story of her life, I have attempted the biographical sketch the following pages will be found to contain.

For any lengthened quotations from Mrs. Gaskell's book (which is throughout referred to as G., the paging being that of the popular edition in one volume), I have the kind permission of Messrs. Smith and Elder.

Mr. Wemyss Reid's monograph on Charlotte Brontë (Macmillan, 1877), is well-known, though whether the author performs the task he somewhat unnecessarily laid upon himself of proving that Mrs. Gaskell's portrait requires re-touching, is a question which is best left open for the consideration of the judicious reader of both books. Mr. Leyland's two volumes, "The Brontë Family" (Sampson Low: 1886), deserve to be read by every one, though, so far as he busies himself with Branwell Brontë, he fails to interest those who, to employ an American figure, "have no use" for that young man. Miss Robin-

14,027

son has also written in the "Eminent Women Series" (Allen), a most interesting account of Emily Brontë, and of her novel and poetry. To all these writers I express my obligations.

Small as this book is it contains some new matter relating to the Rev. Patrick Brontë, and to a period of his life, concerning which nothing hitherto has been written —namely, that which elapsed between his leaving Cambridge with his degree in 1806, and going into Yorkshire in 1811.

For the interesting account I am able to furnish of Patrick Brontë's life at Wethersfield, in Essex, I am indebted, in the first instance, to my friend the Rev. Henry Bonner of Handsworth, Birmingham, to whom I owe my introduction to Mrs. Lowe, a daughter of the heroine of the tale of true love, which will be found duly recorded in its place. Mrs. Lowe herself I have to thank for her great kindness in putting upon paper the story as she heard it from her mother, and for permitting me to make use of it.

A. B.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

The Pruntys of County Down ; Patrick Prunty, the son of Hugh, born 1777 ; one of ten ; schoolmaster and tutor ; leaves Ireland for good and all ; St. John's College, Cambridge ; drills side by side with Lord Palmerston ; takes his degree and holy orders ; the curate of Wethersfield in the county of Essex ; Miss Mary Mildred Burder ; the incident of the "Roasting Jack ;" love and mystery ; an uncle ; treason against love ; intercepted letters ; the curate disappears ; a long subsequent proposal of marriage ; refusal ; Hartshead in Yorkshire ; Miss Maria Branwell ; marriage ; Thornton ; Haworth ; children ; Charlotte born April 21, 1816 ; death of Mrs. Brontë ; violence of Mr. Brontë's temper ; Haworth Moors ; note relating to education when the century was young 15

CHAPTER II.

The Rev. Patrick Brontë an author, not to say a poet ; list of his works ; effect upon the household ; the Brontë children writers from the cradle ; Mr. Brontë a good promoter of talent ; Maria Brontë ; Miss Branwell comes from Penzance

PAGE

"Pilgrim's Progress" and an arrested flight to Bradford; Mr. Brontë's account of the children, and their answers to his questions 30

CHAPTER III.

A cheap school for the daughters of the poor pious clergy; a much needed institution; a sprout of the brain of the Rev. Carus Wilson; Maria and Elizabeth go to Cowan's Bridge in July, 1824; change from the freedom of home to the slavery of school; bad cooking; Sundays; Maria an untidy child and bullied by a teacher, "Miss Scatcherd"; Maria Brontë is "Helen Burns"; old pupils now to be found who say they loved "Miss Scatcherd" who did not bully them; "Miss Temple" praised the school after leaving it; Charlotte and Emily go to it in September, 1824; Maria is taken home to die; Elizabeth also dies; Charlotte and Emily return to the school, but are taken away before Christmas, 1825 36

CHAPTER IV.

The old life under new leadership; the memorial tablet on the right-hand side of the communion table; Tabitha; Charlotte Brontë commences author; her works many and minute; the Duke of Wellington her hero; the play of the "Islanders"; a pleasant party prematurely broken up; "The History of the year 1829;" the Catholic Question . 41

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Gaskell's description of Charlotte Brontë in 1831; goes to school in a covered cart to Miss Wooler's at Roehead; makes friends with Miss Ellen Nussey and the Rose,

PAGE:

and Jessie Yorke of "Shirley;" her arrival and appearance described; astonishing ignorance, and still more astonishing knowledge; confesses herself an author; a nocturnal story-teller of great merit; Miss Wooler's stories; leaves school in 1831 and returns home; a great reader; Methodist magazines; advises Miss Nussey about books and reading; Miss Nussey's visit to London; Branwell Brontë; what is to be done?; Charlotte returns to Roehead as a teacher; Emily goes with her as a pupil; Emily Brontë breaks down and returns home; Charlotte not fond of teaching or of children; religious opinions; Christmas of 1836; Plans for the future; Dreams about literature; correspondence with Southey; Anne Brontë; Christmas of 1837; the question of Tabitha settled by boycotting the baker; Miss Wooler's school removed to Dewsbury Moor; Charlotte breaks down and is sent home; refuses a clergyman; becomes a governess in a vulgar family; the Newfoundland dog in front and the governess behind; comes home and refuses another clergyman 48

CHAPTER VI.

The year 1840 spent at home; begins a story which was never finished; writes to Wordsworth; French novels; goes out again as a governess; pleasant people, but she is unhappy; her way of talking of children not the right way; longs to travel; projects for a school of her own; her letter to her aunt; Brussels decided upon; the dome of St. Paul's; M. Heger's; Brussels experiences recorded in "Villette"; remarks thereupon; the Belgian pupils; Charlotte and Emily taught by M. Heger; they remain in Brussels all through the summer; in October, 1842, their aunt dies and they go home; Charlotte returns after Christmas against her conscience; is unhappy and lonely; the horrors of the long vacation; solitude; Madame Heger estranged; Charlotte returns home in January, 1844 71

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE

1844 spent at home; Branwell at the parsonage; Mr. Brontë's sight a cause of anxiety; old Tabby and the potatoes; Dr. Johnson and his cat "Hodge"; how to behave in the presence of bachelors; Charlotte lights upon Emily's poems; Anne has compositions, also Charlotte; a volume projected; paid for and published by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; a difficult thing to be a poet; superiority of poetry over prose; specimens of the three sisters' poems 84

CHAPTER VIII.

"Wuthering Heights," "Agnes Grey," and "The Professor" finished before the publication of the poems; "The Professor" goes the rounds of the publishers and is rejected by all; Mr. Brontë's eyes operated upon at Manchester successfully; "The Professor" turns up on the morning of the operation rejected once more; "Jane Eyre" begun; method of writing it; Miss Brontë's idea for a heroine; Indifference to curates; makes tea for, and loses her temper with them; Messrs. Smith and Elder reject "The Professor," but state any other work would be carefully considered if in three volumes; "Jane Eyre" sent and accepted, August, 1847; never refused as frequently stated; "Jane Eyre" published in October, 1847, and a success from the first . 94

CHAPTER IX.

"Jane Eyre;" its vitality; evidently a woman's book; essentially a love story; much of Charlotte Brontë herself in the heroine; superb energy of the book; its crudities; the errors lie on the surface; alarm created among the worshippers of propriety; discreditable attack made by *The Quarterly* on the book and its author; she is unruffled by it; the reviewers' ruffianism 100

CHAPTER X.

PAGE

Mr. Brontë is told about "Jane Eyre" but no one else; anonymity a mistake; "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey" published, but do not sell; the public confused about Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; Currer and Acton go to London and show themselves in Cornhill; are taken about and known as the Miss Browns; Branwell in a distressing state; Anne's health feeble; Emily begins to cough; Branwell dies September 14, 1848; Emily dies December 19, 1848; Anne dies May 28, 1849; Charlotte and her father left alone 115

CHAPTER XI.

As soon as "Jane Eyre" finished "Shirley" was begun; before the first volume concluded Branwell was dead, before the the third, Emily and Anne were dead; great pains, but doubtful as to the result; published in October, 1849; criticism 122

CHAPTER XII.

"Shirley" let out the secret; Miss Brontë's name first mentioned in a Liverpool newspaper; in November, 1849, Miss Brontë went to London as an authoress; shy in society; meets Mr. Thackeray; sees Macready; not a good critic of contemporary literature; makes Miss Martineau's acquaintance; returns home in December; in June, 1850, again visits London; sees the Duke of Wellington, and scolds Mr. Thackeray; sudden visit to Edinburgh and great enjoyment there 132

CHAPTER XIII.

PAGE

Mr. Brontë a man of fixed and unsocial habits; Charlotte alone in the room once occupied by the sisters; unfitted for solitude which robbed her of joy; unshared happiness no taste; what to do with Mr. X?; gloomy thoughts of a lonely future; accumulated nothing since "Shirley"; leaves the parsonage when possible; visits the Lakes and meets Mrs. Gaskell, August, 1850; edits a new edition of "Wuthering Heights," and writes a short notice of her sisters; heart-breaking work; visits Miss Martineau at Ambleside in 1851, and makes the acquaintance of Dr. Arnold's family; goes to London for the Exhibition, and hears Thackeray lecture; begins "Villette" 137

CHAPTER X .

"Villette" published January, 1853; general criticism thereon. 147

CHAPTER XV.

The autumn of 1851 spent at home in ill-health; reads "Esmond"; Mr. Nicholls, her father's curate, proposes marriage; she is willing, but her father refuses his consent and becomes violent; project has to be abandoned; painful situation; visits London again; the Bishop of Ripon stops a night at Haworth, and is pleased with the propriety of the arrangements; a trip to Scotland spoilt by a baby; Mr. Brontë suddenly withdraws all objections to Mr. Nicholls, and the marriage takes place in Haworth Church on the 29th of June, 1854; honeymoon spent in the South of Ireland; father, daughter, and son-in-law live together in the parsonage; Mrs. Nicholls begins another story; is taken ill and dies March 31, 1855; Mr. Brontë and Mr. Nicholls live together till the former's death on June 7, 1861 . . 160

CHAPTER XVI.

PAGE

Novels now received more coldly than of yore; part taken by women in their production; Lord Macaulay wrong in attacking Montgomery; even small authorship has its uses, and popularity which is but for a moment does nobody any real harm; Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot; the novel of the future; why should novelists speak scorn of their predecessors? . . . 168

INDEX 183

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

CHAPTER I.

ALTHOUGH there is not much, nay—if Shakespeare will have it so—nothing in a name, lovers of English literature may yet be a little thankful that the father of the two women who were respectively to write "Jane Eyre" and "Wuthering Heights," took occasion, before exchanging the air of his native Ireland for that of St. John's College, Cambridge, to turn his paternal Prunty into the more euphonious surname which the genius of his daughters has made famous.

Patrick, the son of Hugh Prunty, was born in the parish of Ahaderg, County Down, on the day of the saint whose name he bore, 1777. He was one of ten children, all remarkable, so it said, for their strength and beauty; but Patrick was the strongest and the most beautiful—or so we are free to assert, for nobody has ever been at the pains to discover anything about Charlotte Brontë's nine Irish uncles and aunts.

In the conventional language of respectable biography,

Whitworth College
Spokane, Wn.

the young Patrick attracted the attention of a neighbouring vicar, the Rev. Mr. Tighe, in whose family he was sometime tutor—an honour, however, he did not attain until he had shown both courage and perseverance in opening, at the early age of sixteen, and maintaining for five years, some sort of a village school of his own. During this period he doubtless acquired some portion of that skill in the art of inspiring children with a passion for reading, and a lively enthusiasm for great men and great deeds, which it is black ingratitude to deny to the father of the Brontës. Here also in Protestant Ulster he imbibed that hostility to the Roman Church, which being transmitted to his daughter Charlotte, breaks forth so fiercely in "Villette."

Patrick Brontë must have been about twenty when he became tutor in Mr. Tighe's family—a position he occupied for some five years when, the vicar kindly encouraging, he plucked up courage, left Ireland for good and all, and as Mrs. Gaskell puts it, presented himself at the gates of St. John's College, Cambridge, with the intent of qualifying himself for English orders. This flight from Ireland and Irish pedagogy to an English university and the English hierarchy was an act of courage, and prompted by an ambition which at all events approved itself to his daughters, for we find Charlotte Brontë familiarly referring to it, whilst trying to rouse her aunt's enthusiasm to the sticking-point of lending her some money to carry out an ambitious scheme of her own.

It was in 1802 that Patrick Brontë went up to Cambridge. Of his university life but one tradition

survives. France threatening an invasion, the patriotic flew to arms, and a corps of volunteers being formed amongst the undergraduates, Brontë of John's, used to find himself drilling side by side with another Irishman and Johnian, Temple, afterwards Lord Palmerston. Both these men, oddly enough, had faults; but one thing may be asserted pretty positively, that such faults as they had were not of the kind likely to be displayed in the presence of the enemy.

In 1806 Mr. Brontë took his bachelor's degree. Where and how he spent his vacations—those most striking features in the university career of most of us—is not recorded. It would seem as if he never revisited his native land, or saw any of his own people again. Scotchmen have been known to cross the border—to seek the lands which lie beyond Pentland, to sail the seas which tumble beyond Forth; but deep in the hidden heart of each one of them lies the *animus revertendi*, and our law reports are full of cases which prove how hard it is for a Scotchman to lose, how easy for him to regain, his domicile of origin. But Irishmen too often give poor Erin the cut direct. Certainly Mr. Brontë did.

After taking his degree, Mr. Brontë, in further pursuance of his original design, took orders, and in October, 1806, appeared in the small village of Wethersfield, in the county of Essex, as the new curate. Wethersfield was, after its own agricultural fashion, as remote a place as Haworth ever proved to be, and what is more, remains remote to this day. The nearest railway station is seven miles off, and Braintree still is to Wethersfield what Bradford was to Haworth. The church stands high, for

Wethersfield, it should be noted, is not in flat but in hilly Essex, a country of windmills and high-climbing roads. The Norman tower is crowned with a copper spire, which, after the fashion of that useful metal, has turned a bright green, and shines in the sun with an almost Eastern fervour. The Nonconformists of the neighbourhood have always taken an interest in the churchyard, where are said to lie under high grassy mounds, the dust and bones of godly ministers, ejected from the Establishment by the ecclesiastical legislation of King Charles the Second. A son of Rogers the Protomartyr is buried here. Facing the pleasant village green stands—not without a dignity of its own—a capacious meeting-house, of no mean antiquity for a meeting-house, for it was rebuilt in 1822, the original foundation being much older. By the side of the chapel stands the minister's house. Mr. Brontë's vicar was the Rev. Joseph Jowett, Regius Professor of the Civil Law at Cambridge, and a member of Trinity Hall, in whose gift is the living. Dr. Jowett, although the author of a volume of Village Sermons, was non-resident. The first entry in Mr. Bronte's big hand-writing in the Church Books, which were most obligingly shown to me by the present vicar, the Rev. William Marsh, formerly Tutor of Trinity Hall, is a baptism on the 12th of October, 1806.

The new curate found a home for himself opposite the church, in a house then occupied by an elderly maiden lady, Miss Mildred Davy. She was seventy years of age, and, having been lame from her youth, had led a life quiet even for Wethersfield. In the quaint old phrase of the countryside, a phrase redolent of a cosy past, "she

never went abroad," not thereby meaning the continent of Europe, far less Egypt and India, but the market-place of Braintree. She was a woman of education, reflection, and high repute. A more suitable home for a pious and impressionable curate could not have been discovered in any parish in the Eastern Counties. But Miss Davy had a sister who had married Mr. John Burder, of The Broad—a large, many-windowed, comfortable farmhouse three miles across the fields from Wethersfield. Those were prosperous days for the farmer—

> "When beef and mutton and other meat
> Were almost as dear as money to eat;
> And farmers reaped golden harvests of wheat,
> At the Lord knows what per quarter"—

and Mr. John Burder was a prosperous man, loved and respected by all about him, pleasant to look upon and cheering to listen to. But shortly before Mr. Brontë's arrival the strong man had been struck down, in the very manhood of his days, by a cruel disease and an intolerable pain. The doctors of the district gave him their unavailing drugs, and witnessed his terrible sufferings. "He is still," exclaimed one of them, on leaving the torture-chamber, "the strongest and finest man in the whole parish." His struggles over, he died in his fortieth year, and was followed to his grave in Finchingfield church not only by his family in mourning-coaches, but by forty farmers on horseback.

John Burder's widow and four children were left to bear their grief as human creatures learn to do. The task was beyond the capacity of the farmer's favourite dog,

who, after three weeks of it, crept into a corner, and, like his master, died, and was buried.

The eldest daughter of the family was named Mary Mildred Davy, and at the date of Mr. Brontë's appearance in the parish had attained the far from unattractive age of eighteen. She was a comely damsel, with her father's brown curls and her mother's blue eyes.

She was not, however, a member of Mr. Brontë's congregation, for she "worshipped in the meeting-house;" but—and here I quote from her daughter's account—"one day her mother sent her to Wethersfield with a present of game for her aunt. Eager that it should be prepared for dinner with as little delay as possible, she took it into the kitchen, and, rolling up her sleeve from her arm, was in act of winding up the roasting-jack, when" —enters the Rev. Patrick Brontë, B.A. For him, as he afterwards assured her, it was a case of love at first sight.

"Heaven bless thee!
Thou hast the sweetest face I ever look'd on!"

was his heart's greeting to Mary Burder. But to resume the narrative. "Henceforth" (that is, after the incident of the roasting-jack) "the errands and messages to 'Aunt Davy' became more and more interesting to her young niece. She soon discovered the curate had no common mind. The books he lent her were choice, and all his conversation revealed a man who had read much, seen much, and observed more than most. She soon perceived he was also a man of the strongest purpose and an inflexible will. On two points Patrick Brontë and Mary Burder

were alike: they were both inherently God-fearing, and each had a deep, strong nature, but with a difference: hers was calm in its depth, his subject to great tidal waves of passion. And then over all this pleasant, improving book-reading and talking came the glow and the freshness and the tenderness of the strong man's first love. It was sunshine to her young heart, and he had 'the dew of her youth;' and his passionate appeals for her love were not the most successful in winning her regard. She shrank from great demonstrations, *and remembered he was an Irishman.* He told her that, but would tell her little else. She wondered that he did not speak of his home and his people. He often showed her letters from titled friends and distinguished persons, but she would rather have seen the shortest, simplest home-letter. Was there any mystery about him?"

I ought to have mentioned that Mr. Burder's executor was his only brother, who lived at Yeldham, and who appears to have been a cold, heartless, and determined man. The widow, who was of a timid and shrinking nature, had great difficulty in ever opposing his will. The attention of this unamiable person, who accounted himself properly enough as the guardian of his nieces and the moneys to which they would become entitled on attaining twenty-one or marriage, being called to the attachment which had sprung up between Mary and the new curate, he proceeded to make the usual inquiries in an even more than usually disagreeable fashion. "Who was this Patrick Brontë? Where does he come from? An Irishman is he? Who are his connections, and what his chances of carrying his brogue into an English rectory?" These not

wholly impertinent questions were never answered. Mr. Brontë was not the man to speak upon compulsion, and he was evidently determined to hold his tongue about the Pruntys in County Down. It was soon obvious to the executor that things had already gone too far to be stopped by mere avuncular exhortations, or even temper, and he therefore concocted and carried out a plan as dishonourable as it was cruel. He invited his niece for a long visit to his house at Yeldham, where he lived alone with his wife, who trembled at his nod; and further, he insisted upon Mary accepting the invitation. The situation of this poor girl, a prisoner in her uncle's house, with no one to talk to, and waiting, waiting, waiting for love-letters which never came, was one to have been described by her lover's destined daughter. Alone amongst English women, Charlotte Brontë could have made that sorrow speak.

Her lover was not to blame. He wrote, not once, nor twice, but many times; but his letters were intercepted and destroyed, and never feasted the eyes of the only person for whom they were intended.

The visit over, poor Mary returned home—one can fancy how; but the Wethersfield curate had gone, none knew whither. Her letters to him had in her absence, it scarcely need be added, without her authority, been demanded of him, and he had returned them; and there they lay. "When the poor girl opened the little bundle, thinking there might be some explanatory word, there was none; but she found a small card with her lover's face in profile, and under it the words, 'Mary, you have torn the heart; spare the face.'"

The lovers never met again.

The date of Mr. Brontë's leaving Wethersfield appears, so far as I can judge from the church books, to have been in January, 1809, the last entry in his hand-writing being of a burial on the 1st of that month.

Mary Burder had many suitors during the years that sped between her lover's departure and her own marriage in 1824; but she had no mind to be wed, and single she still was when, one day in her old home, she received a letter in a remembered hand from Haworth. It was from Patrick Brontë, and besought her to be his wife and the mother of his six motherless infants. She answered, No!

More than a year after this refusal she became the wife of the Rev. Peter Sibree, the minister of the Wethersfield meeting-house, and took up her abode in the vine-covered manse facing the village green. Four children were born to her, who loved her dearly. Twenty-five years after she received the well-known photograph of the old father of the now famous Brontë children, with his kindest regards. Mary Burder outlived her first lover, dying in 1866, in her seventy-seventh year.

The "might have beens" of life are mostly futile things, but it is hard to help wondering how it would have fared with Charlotte Brontë, her brother and sisters, had Mary Burder said "Yes" and not "No" to her old lover. A loving and wise stepmother she certainly would have made. Mindful of her own bitter school experiences,[1] she would, we may feel certain, have had nothing to do with Cowan's Bridge. The children would have lived wholly different lives, and

[1] See note at end of chapter.

have had very different tales to tell. Perhaps they would have told no tales, and been happy instead.

Where Mr. Brontë fled to after leaving Wethersfield I do not know, but in 1811 he went into the county so closely associated with his daughter's fame.

It was to Hartshead, a small village to the east of Huddersfield, that Mr. Brontë went and here in 1812 he married—being then of the mature age of thirty-three—Miss Maria Branwell, the daughter of Mr. Thomas Branwell, a trader, of Penzance, Cornwall. Of this lady little is known. She was twenty-nine years of age when she married, and is thus described, of course, from hearsay, by Mrs. Gaskell—

"Miss Branwell was extremely small in person; not pretty, but very elegant, and always dressed with a quiet simplicity of taste, which accorded well with her general character, and of which some of the details call to mind the style of dress preferred by her daughter for her favourite heroines."[1]

One has it in one's heart to pity this poor lady. The tempestuous suitor made short work with her affections, wooing, winning, and carrying her off to his house all in the space of a few months. He did not leave her much time for sober reflection. She had left Cornwall in the early summer of 1812 on a visit to an uncle in Yorkshire, and before August was out she was engaged to marry Mr. Brontë, a contract she fulfilled in the cold winter of the same year. She never saw sunny Cornwall again, or heard waves break upon the shore. Thornton followed upon Hartshead, and Haworth upon Thornton. Child

[1] G., 31.

followed child in quick succession. Maria in 1813, Elizabeth in 1814, Charlotte on the 21st of April, 1816, Patrick Branwell in 1817, Emily in 1818, Anne in 1819, and then the poor tired wife, having done the world all the service she was destined to do, left the grim Haworth moors to be the stern nursing mother of her six children, and died on the 15th of September, 1821, aged thirty-nine. During her last illness she liked if possible to be raised in bed to see the nurse clean the grate, because she did it as it was done in Cornwall.

Mrs. Gaskell tells some startling stories about Mr. Brontë's temper, how on one occasion he cut into shreds a silk gown which had been given to his wife, objecting to her even having a dress of so obnoxious a material in her possession, for wear it she never did, or proposed to do. Another day, so it is said, he burnt the hearth-rug. On a third occasion he sawed off the backs of chairs. These anecdotes no doubt establish the violence of Mr. Brontë's temper, but further they do not carry us. The secret of his married life lay buried in his wife's grave and his own breast, nor did he ever, during the forty years remaining to him of life, seek to impart its history to another. And in thus keeping his own counsel he surely did well.

The two elder children, Maria and Elizabeth, were born at Hartshead, where Mr. Brontë remained till 1816, when he was presented to the living of Thornton, in the parish of Bradford. The rest of the family were all born at Thornton, Charlotte heading the list in 1816, and Anne closing it in 1819.

In February, 1820, the Brontë family, father, mother,

and six children, the eldest six years, the youngest not so many months, took possession of their new home.

Haworth has been terribly over-described, and familiar as I have long been with the place and its surroundings, I feel myself quite unequal to follow in the wake of so many picturesque pens.

To southern eyes, fed on foliage and lovely hedge-rows, the bare up-hill road from Keighley to Haworth may have no charm, save that it was often traversed by the feet of those who have given the world pleasure, and Haworth itself, with its stone walls, stony street, and high houses on each side, may seem more like a dwindled town than a moorland village. But those for whom the words "the North" must ever remain amongst the most moving in the language, are not prepared to lavish pity on the six little creatures, so soon to be motherless, whom we have just left at the door of their house, because they have to make a home of Haworth. Somewhere they had to live, and cheaply too, and where would they have been better off than in a grim village and amongst a sturdy, hard-working manufacturing race, which, well-acquainted though it was with hardship and distress, always held its own and went its own way. Behind them, too, lay the Haworth moors, of all kinds of scenery the most permanently impressive, though whether it is to the earth or to the sky, to the eye or the ear we are most indebted, who but a poet can say? At all events, there the moors always were, with the purple of their summers, winter's trackless white, the cold promise of morning, and the glowing close of day,

and at all times, now high, now low, sobbing, whispering, the

> "Undescribed sounds
> That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
> And wither drearily on barren moors."

Here, too, the children were effectually shielded from that insidious taint of snobbishness, that love of a patron and "the great house," so apt to cling through life to those born within the ivy-clad walls of southern parsonages. Haworth was much too steep and stony, rude and rough, to grow that kind of weed.

Mrs. Brontë only came to Haworth to die, and a nurse was engaged to attend to her, and she it was who told Mrs. Gaskell how at this time "the six little creatures used to walk out hand in hand towards the glorious wild moors, which in after-life they loved so passionately, the elder ones taking thoughtful care for the toddling wee things."

NOTE.

Miss Burder's account of her school-days has an interest of its own, telling us as it does of a state of mind as to the proper mode of bringing up children, now happily growing remote. I give it from Mrs. Lowe's written recollections:—

"She was sent, when only five years old, with her little sister to a large boarding-school at Bocking, where all teaching was enforced with the birch rod. The sewing done there would have more than satisfied any Board School examiners of the present day. Any

stitch passing below the thread drawn brought a sharp blow on the small fingers from the avenging rod of Madame Fowle. And the terrors of the schoolroom were less than the tortures of the playground, for female fagging was carried out in no mild measure, though with another name, for every poor little girl belonged to a big one, who was styled 'her Mamma.' It was the duty of these mammas to put their children to bed, an office they performed in the most expeditious way possible, hustling the little ones into their cots without ceremony, and with no evening prayer. The first night the two small Burders cried themselves to sleep because they had not said their 'Our Father,' but when their mammas came up to bed they were violently roused from their first deep slumber by shaking and exhortation to wake up and say their prayers, and as there was little alacrity it was found very stimulating to carry these small, limp, torpid sleepers to the large marble hearthstone on which the *pater noster* got nightly repeated with no want of speed. They remained in this house of correction for some years, living from week to week on the joy of seeing their father's genial face every Wednesday, when he called on his way to Braintree market."

Nor do the boys of the family seem to have had a pleasant time at school. Here is a scene which occurred after John Burder's death—

"It was one of these weekly visits when the widow and her daughters were dining with their executor in the usual stiff and silent style, that the door was violently burst open and the eldest lad, John, rushed in heated and breathless with running. Before a question was asked the jacket was off, the sleeve rolled up, and an arm exposed red and black with stripes. 'Look here, mother, do you think I'll stand that.' 'Give him as much on the other arm, and send him back to his master,' cried the uncle. ('God be with his soul! a' was a merry man.') 'Oh, Mr. Burder," said the widow, appealingly, 'you have never been a parent, or you wouldn't say so.' John's story was that his younger brother was being thrashed so unmercifully that he could stand it no longer, and interfered. Whereupon he was thrashed, and his resentment

becoming strong, he there and then rushed out of school and made his way home—twenty miles—as fast as he could, and his sister took care that he was not sent back."

The savageries of the schoolroom which so moved the humane soul of old Montaigne have only just ceased to disgrace England. One may and ought to have sympathy with Board School teachers, who are certainly amongst the most hard-worked and tried of our public servants, but when they demand rods and ferules we are bound, remembering how recent are our traditions of humanity, to answer "Never!"

CHAPTER II.

THE Rev. Patrick Brontë was an author, not to say a poet. My copy of his "Cottage Poems" rescued, not without emotion from a twopenny box, is bound in vellum, and from the inscription it bears on its flyleaf, was evidently thought a very suitable gift-book for Christmas 1812. It had been published the previous year. These poems bear no traces of the author's quick temper. They are artless and pious, and marked by a straightforwardness of language, not as a rule found compatible by minor poets with the exigencies of their art. Mr. Brontë made no attempt to sink the parson in the poet, but composed his poems as he wrote his sermons in the honest hope of doing good, and it may safely be said of them that very much worse advice has often been given in more melodious numbers. His other books are called "The Rural Ministry" published in 1813, a volume of poems; "The Cottage in the Wood; or, The Art of becoming Rich and Happy," which is a prose story partaking of the nature of a tract, but includes a poetical piece; and the "Maid of Killarney," published in 1818, which is poetry. He also wrote a pamphlet, if not pamphlets, on the Catholic Question.

The writings of Mr. Brontë are certainly no great things, still a book is a book, "though there is nothing in it," and even a pamphlet published by the head of a house has been known to impart a distinct literary flavour to the entire establishment. That it is possible, nay, by no means difficult, to write a book is a fact mercifully concealed from a large, though unhappily a diminishing, number of people. The Brontës were born free of the mystery of authorship. Writers almost from the cradle, their nursery was early known as the "children's study."

Mr. Brontë is, in my judgment, entitled to more credit in the matter of the education of his children than has been given him. One has only to consider what stocks and stones most fathers are to perceive this. The literary atmosphere of the house, the liberal cultivation, which, as Mr. Pattison remarks in his "Milton," "if not imbibed in the home neither school nor college ever confers," all proceeded from him. The eldest born, Maria, naturally became his first companion, and quickly picked up from him those sound Tory politics which she, in her turn, handed down the family from one little Reactionist to another, till they made a blaze brighter than the kitchen fire round which the children were wont to gather and to talk. Meanwhile the poor mother was dying upstairs.

After Mrs. Brontë's death in September, 1821, an unmarried sister, Miss Branwell, took the long journey from Penzance to Haworth, and came to keep house for her brother-in-law and his six children, the eldest being eight and the youngest one. The cold, bleak place proved too much for her nerves, and drove her to her

bedroom, where it is narrated she passed nearly all her time, not however as a place of illness, but merely as a harbour or shelter from an un-Cornish climate. She was a lady of character, and, despite her limited range of personal action, ruled the house and taught her nieces sewing and the household arts. With their intellectuals she does not appear to have interfered. What teaching the children got was from their father, and certainly no man ever succeeded better than he did in making his children hungry for the marrow and fatness of books. It is unfortunate we have no catalogue of the parsonage library. Mrs. Gaskell surmises that it contained no children's books, but proceeds cheerfully to endow it "with the wholesome pasturage of English literature," on which, quoting Charles Lamb, she fancies "their eager minds browsing." But the age of the Brontës' childhood was not the age of reprints or even of collected editions, and we may be certain that no such feast as Mrs. Gaskell hints at was ever spread before them. Still, books there were—some at home, others to be had for the walk at the Keighley Lending Library. At home, for example, was the "Pilgrim's Progress," whose pages, read with open-eyed wonder and implicit faith, unteazed by allegory, sent little Charlotte Brontë, aged six, off on her travels from that City of Destruction, Haworth, to the Heaven of unvisited Bradford. Fortunately, however, her little feet bore her no farther on her way to Heaven than a mile from Haworth, where the road, darkened by trees, bore so obvious a resemblance to the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and was therefore so certain to prove full of

"snares, traps, gins, and nets," that her heart failed her, and she turned back.

The keen fancies of these children needed but to be set in motion to work out their own deliverance. It may be difficult to answer the poet's question, and say where fancy is bred, but it certainly does not spring from library shelves. Books may accumulate and wits decay. Then too the children were numerous enough to make a little company of their own. Mr. Brontë wrote to Mrs. Gaskell:

"When mere children, as soon as they could read and write, Charlotte and her brothers and sisters used to invent and act little plays of their own, in which the Duke of Wellington, my daughter Charlotte's hero, was sure to come off conqueror; when a dispute would not unfrequently arise amongst them regarding the comparative merits of him, Buonaparte, Hannibal, and Cæsar. When the argument got warm, and rose to its height, as their mother was then dead, I had sometimes to come in as arbitrator, and settle the dispute according to the best of my judgment. Generally in the management of these concerns I frequently thought that I discovered signs of rising talent, which I had seldom or never before seen in any of their age. . . . . A circumstance now occurs to my mind which I may as well mention. When my children were very young, when, as far as I can remember, the oldest was about ten years of age, and the youngest about four, thinking that they knew more than I had yet discovered, in order to make them speak with less timidity, I deemed that if they were put

under a sort of cover I might gain my end; and happening to have a mask in the house, I told them all to stand and speak boldly from under cover of the mask.

"I began with the youngest (Anne, afterwards Acton Bell), and asked what a child like her most wanted; she answered, 'Age and experience.' I asked the next (Emily, afterwards Ellis Bell), what I had best do with her brother Branwell, who was sometimes a naughty boy; she answered, 'Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him.' I asked Branwell what was the best way of knowing the difference between the intellects of man and woman; he answered, 'By considering the difference between them as to their bodies.' I then asked Charlotte what was the best book in the world; she answered, 'The Bible.' And what was the next best; she answered, 'The Book of Nature.' I then asked the next what was the best mode of education for a woman; she answered, 'That which would make her rule her house well.' Lastly, I asked the oldest what was the best mode of spending time; she answered, 'By laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity.' I may not have given precisely their words, but I have nearly done so, as they make a deep and lasting impression on my memory. The substance, however, was exactly as I have stated."[1]

I am sorry that poor Maria Brontë, whom early death robbed of fame, should be here represented by a somewhat professional reply, but the wise little creature is not

[1] G., pp. 41, 42.

to be blamed for giving the very answer the question was evidently intended to elicit. But let me add what her father said of her, that long before she died, at the age of eleven, he could converse with her on any of the leading topics of the day with as much freedom and pleasure as with any grown-up person.

CHAPTER III.

THE eldest of the children, Maria, was eleven years old, and the intelligent, quick-witted child her father described her, when she and the second daughter, Elizabeth—a year younger—were sent for the first time to school at Cowan's Bridge, a tiny place by the side of a stream called the Leck, where it is crossed by the high road leading from Leeds to Kendal. It was a cheap school, as, indeed, it needs must have been to be within the reach of the poor parson of Haworth, and was designed to provide what was called a suitable education for the numerous daughters of the poor pious clergy. The terms were certainly low—£14 a year, including clothing, lodging, boarding, and educating. The pupils all appeared in the same dress—white frocks on Sundays and nankeen on other days, and so on. A deficit being, of course, inevitable, the subscriptions of the charitable were invited to keep the place open. A school like this is always the sprout or fancy of some one man's brain, and Cowan Bridge proceeded from that of the Rev. Carus Wilson, a wealthy clergyman, well known in Yorkshire, and highly respected for his energy and zeal. A

cheap school for clergymen's daughters was an undoubted need, and a considerable number of girls—though reports vary enormously as to what that number was—were assembled together at the opening of the establishment in 1823. When Mr. Brontë brought his two daughters there in July, 1824, there were some seventy or eighty pupils.

To leave the freedom of the moors, and of their own "study," their talks and stories, politics and plays, for the confinement of this truly detestable place, and its sterile round of inane studies, the use of the globes, grammar, writing, and arithmetic, must, under any circumstances, have been a terrible trial for these "children of the heather and the wind." But in poor Maria Brontë's case it meant more than a trial, more than sobs and tears; it meant torture and death. She was a delicate child, not, perhaps, made to live, and better fitted for the companionship of her elders, and for rational conversation and grown-up enthusiasms, than for the hideous details of a charity school life. She was, it appears, untidy and forgetful; crimes of high magnitude in such places. The school was ill-managed. The cook—that most important estate of the realm of health—was, says Mrs. Gaskell, careless, dirty, and wasteful. The oatmeal porridge was burnt, the beef was tainted, the milk was "bingy"—and then the whole house smelt like the opening chapter of "Le Père Goriot," of rancid fat. Sundays must have been horrible days with their long walk, "more than two miles," through an unsheltered country to a church in the midst of fields where their reverend founder preached and expounded the gospel of gratitude.

The poor things took their dinner with them and ate it between the services in a room over the porch. This went on in winter as well as summer. Maria Brontë began to cough. She was also the victim of one of the teachers. How far the almost savage picture drawn in "Jane Eyre" by a younger sister's terrible pen of Maria's sufferings is to be accepted as a literal representation is an idle question. When Charlotte Brontë was writing "Jane Eyre" she never thought that she was indicting her old school for barbarity or making it infamous before the world. She was but using her material, stiffening her fiction with the tragedy of her own sad memories. But, none the less, I am persuaded that, rightly or wrongly, Charlotte Brontë believed in the substantial accuracy of her sketch. That Helen Burns stands for Maria Brontë is certain. So, too, Miss Temple and Miss Scatcherd are from the life. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his admirable sketch of the Brontë family in the "National Dictionary of Biography," says that old pupils have come to light who loved Miss Scatcherd. It is like enough. The characters of schoolmasters and mistresses like those of Henry VIII. and Mary Queen of Scots are always open questions. Some brutal fellow, who perhaps never opened his lips save to wound sensibility or jeer at infirmity, is often found years afterwards living in the easy memory of some plump pachyderm as an essentially good creature—though perhaps with a bit of a tongue. But others there will be who still quiver at his name, as they remember how he poisoned their days and paralyzed the gaiety of childhood. It is not to be supposed that Miss Scatcherd bullied everybody. Cowan's

Bridge School was not a hell upon earth—it was only badly built and badly drained, and, for a time, badly cooked. The routine was not of exhilarating interest, and one of the teachers was angelical and another diabolical. The strong pulled through and the weak went to the wall. It was, in fact, very like a much larger place. The "angelical teacher's" testimony is all on the side of the school. "Often," so wrote her clerical husband, "often have I heard my late dear wife speak of her sojourn at Cowan's Bridge, always in terms of admiration of Mr. Carus Wilson, his parental love to his pupils and their love of him; of the food and general treatment in terms of approval. I have heard her allude to an unfortunate cook, who used at times to spoil the porridge, but who, she said, was soon dismissed."

But this picture is obviously overdrawn, and only proves that persons of Miss Temple's temperament do not make good inspectors of schools. It is a pity we have not got Miss Scatcherd's account of her "sojourn" at Cowan's Bridge. I have small doubt it would have been more to the purpose.

Anyhow, this was the place to which Maria and Elizabeth came in July, 1824, and where they were followed by Charlotte and Emily in September of the same year. In the spring of 1825, the low fever, spoken of in "Jane Eyre," broke out, and forty of the girls sickened. The Brontës did not have it, but Maria's debility was now so great that her father had to be sent for. He arrived, and took her home by the Leeds coach. In a few days she died. Shortly afterwards Elizabeth was sent home and she too died. Both in the same year,

1825. Charlotte and Emily returned to Cowan's Bridge after the Midsummer holidays of that year, but were not kept there long. Before the Christmas they were once more at home at Haworth.

CHAPTER IV.

THOUGH poor human creatures, feeling only a well-nigh infinite capacity for pain, may often wish to die with those they loved, and whose companionship but a short while back seemed absolutely essential to their very existence, it has been arranged that they should get over this, and be kept working away at the pattern of their lives—not indeed the gay one of their own choice, but the sombre one destiny had previously selected as being, on the whole, far more suitable.

The diminished household of the Brontës resumed possession of the old rooms, and began again its eager life under new leadership.

Charlotte was now called upon to play the *rôle* (the importance of which is perhaps sometimes exaggerated) of "the eldest," and she certainly possessed many qualifications for the part, such as an unselfishness which never wearied, a truthfulness which never flinched, and an unfaltering devotion. Dr. Johnson once said of some book that he would sooner praise it than read it; so of these qualities it may be said that it is easier to praise than to possess them.

The mournful tablet on the right-hand side of the communion table (as Church of England altars were

then content to be called) of Haworth church now read as follows:

HERE
LIE THE REMAINS OF
MARIA BRONTË, WIFE
OF THE
REV. P. BRONTË, A.B., MINISTER OF HAWORTH.
HER SOUL
DEPARTED TO THE SAVIOUR, SEPTEMBER 15, 1821,
IN THE 39TH YEAR OF HER AGE.

"Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."—*Matthew* xxiv. 44.

ALSO HERE LIE THE REMAINS OF
MARIA BRONTË, DAUGHTER OF THE AFORESAID.
SHE DIED ON THE
6TH OF MAY, 1825, IN THE 12TH YEAR OF HER AGE.

AND OF
ELIZABETH BRONTË, HER SISTER,
WHO DIED JUNE 15TH, 1825, IN THE 11TH YEAR OF HER AGE.

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matthew* xviii. 3.

Patrick, Emily, Anne, and Charlotte still played on in the parsonage.

It was about this time that the redoubtable Tabitha joined the household, and soon made herself felt, ruling the kitchen as a cook should, and, as a Yorkshire cook is pretty sure to do, with a rod of iron. Miss Branwell was still in her bedroom, practising such household arts as need no larger sphere. Mr. Brontë had his parish, his politics, and also devoted several hours a day to teaching

his only son his rudiments. And now it was that Charlotte Brontë, in the language of the eighteenth century, commenced author. The list of her works, composed and written by her between her tenth and fifteenth years, is too long to be here inserted. It numbers twenty-two volumes, and would fill several of these pages. Paper was dear in those days, and this voluminous authoress certainly deserves the title, bestowed by Swift upon Pope, of "paper sparing," for anything more distressingly minute than her manuscript can hardly be imagined. The Duke of Wellington was the god of her idolatry. This warrior, though he wrote despatches which excited the envious admiration of Lord Brougham, was not exactly a literary man, and, indeed, observed on one occasion, with much feeling and apt military language, that, owing to his being Chancellor of the University of Oxford, he occupied a position greatly exposed to authors. He was certainly, though he knew it not, for several years well under the guns of Charlotte Brontë. Amongst her completed works are to be found "Lord Charles Wellesley and the Marquis of Douro's Adventures," "The Strange Incident in the Duke of Wellington's Life," "Tale to his Sons," "The Duke of Wellington's Adventure in the Cavern," and others of a like character. She must be congratulated upon her childhood's choice. She had never need to withdraw her homage from the great Duke.

> "Whatever record leap to light,
> He never shall be shamed."

The extract given by Mrs. Gaskell, from an introduc-

tion to "Tales of the Islanders," must be withheld from no single reader:

"June the 31st, 1829.

"The play of the 'Islanders' was formed in December, 1827, in the following manner. One night, about the time when the cold sleet and stormy fogs of November are succeeded by the snow-storms, and high piercing night winds of confirmed winter, we were all sitting round the warm blazing kitchen fire, having just concluded a quarrel with Tabby concerning the propriety of lighting a candle, from which she came off victorious, no candle having been produced. A long pause succeeded, which was at last broken by Branwell saying, in a lazy manner, 'I don't know what to do.' This was echoed by Emily and Anne.

"*Tabby.* Wha ya may go t' bed.

"*Branwell.* I'd rather do anything than that.

"*Charlotte.* Why are you so glum to-night, Tabby? Oh! suppose we had each an island of our own.

"*Branwell.* If we had I would choose the Island of Man.

"*Charlotte.* And I would choose the Isle of Wight.

"*Emily.* The Isle of Arran for me.

"*Anne.* And mine shall be Guernsey.

"We then chose who should be chief men in our islands. Branwell chose John Bull, Astley Cooper, and Leigh Hunt; Emily, Walter Scott, Mr. Lockhart, Johnny Lockhart; Anne, Michael Sadler, Lord Bentinck, Sir Henry Halford. I chose the Duke of Wellington and two sons, Christopher North and Co., and Mr. Abernethy. Here our conversation was interrupted by the to us

dismal sound of the clock striking seven, and we were summoned off to bed."[1]

It seems a pity to think of so bright a party broken up at so preposterously early an hour, when dull ones are allowed to go on till past midnight.

The following "History of the Year 1829" is also a bit of contemporary writing:

THE HISTORY OF THE YEAR 1829.

"Once Papa lent my sister Maria a book. It was an old geography-book; she wrote on its blank leaf, 'Papa lent me this book.' This book is a hundred and twenty years old; it is at this moment lying before me. While I write this I am in the kitchen of the Parsonage, Haworth; Tabby, the servant, is washing up the breakfast-things, and Anne, my youngest sister (Maria was my eldest), is kneeling on a chair, looking at some cakes which Tabby has been baking for us. Emily is in the parlour, brushing the carpet. Papa and Branwell are gone to Keighley. Aunt is upstairs in her room, and I am sitting by the table writing this in the kitchen. Keighley is a small town four miles from here. Papa and Branwell are gone for the newspaper, the *Leeds Intelligencer*, a most excellent Tory newspaper, edited by Mr. Wood, and the proprietor, Mr. Henneman. We take two and see three newspapers a week. We take the *Leeds Intelligencer*, Tory, and the *Leeds Mercury*, Whig, edited by Mr. Baines, and his brother, son-in-law, and his two sons, Edward and Talbot. We see the *John Bull*; it is a

[1] G., 60.

Whitworth College
Spokane, Wn.

high Tory, very violent. Mr. Driver lends us it, as likewise *Blackwood's Magazine*, the most able periodical there is. The editor is Mr. Christopher North, an old man seventy-four years of age; the 1st of April is his birthday; his company are Timothy Tickler, Morgan O'Doherty, Macrabin Mordecai, Mullion, Warneli, and James Hogg, a man of most extraordinary genius, a Scottish shepherd. Our plays were established; 'Young Men,' June, 1826; 'Our Fellows,' July, 1827; 'Islanders,' December, 1827. These are our three great plays, that are not kept secret. Emily's and my best plays were established the 1st of December, 1827; the others March, 1828. Best plays mean secret plays; they are very nice ones. All our plays are very strange ones. Their nature I need not write on paper, for I think I shall always remember them. The 'Young Men's' play took its rise from some wooden soldiers Branwell had; 'Our Fellows' from 'Æsop's Fables;' and the 'Islanders' from several events which happened. I will sketch out the origin of our plays more explicitly if I can. First, 'Young Men.' Papa bought Branwell some wooden soldiers at Leeds; when Papa came home it was night, and we were in bed, so next morning Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed, and I snatched up one and exclaimed, 'This is the Duke of Wellington! This shall be the Duke.' When I had said this, Emily likewise took one up, and said it should be hers. When Anne came down she said one should be hers. Mine was the prettiest of the whole, and the tallest and the most perfect in every part." [1]

[1] G., 62–3.

Politics ran high in Haworth Parsonage, as the following extract, written when Charlotte was about fourteen years old, sufficiently indicates:

"Parliament was opened, and the great Catholic Question was brought forward, and the Duke's measures were disclosed, and all was slander, violence, party-spirit, and confusion. Oh, those six months, from the time of the King's speech to the end! Nobody could write, think, or speak on any subject but the Catholic Question, and the Duke of Wellington, and Mr. Peel. I remember the day when the *Intelligence Extraordinary* came with Mr. Peel's speech in it, containing the terms on which the Catholics were to be let in! With what eagerness papa tore off the cover, and how we all gathered round him, and with what breathless anxiety we listened, as one by one they were disclosed, and explained, and argued upon so ably, and so well! and then when it was all out, how aunt said that she thought it was excellent, and that the Catholics could do no harm with such good security! I remember also the doubts as to whether it would pass the House of Lords, and the prophecies that it would not; and when the paper came which was to decide the question, the anxiety was almost dreadful with which we listened to the whole affair: the opening of the doors; the hush; the royal dukes in their robes, and the great duke in green sash and waistcoat; the rising of all the peeresses when he rose; the reading of his speech—papa saying that his words were like precious gold; and lastly, the majority of one to four (*sic*) in favour of the Bill. But this is a digression," &c., &c.[1]

[1] G., 63.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. GASKELL'S description of Miss Brontë in 1831—though not from the life, for the friendship between the two noble women did not begin till 1850—must be given.

"This is perhaps a fitting time to give some personal description of Miss Brontë. In 1831, she was a quiet, thoughtful girl, of nearly fifteen years of age, very small in figure—'stunted' was the word she applied to herself—but as her limbs and head were in just proportion to the slight, fragile body, no word in ever so slight a degree suggestive of deformity could properly be applied to her; with soft, thick, brown hair, and peculiar eyes, of which I find it difficult to give a description, as they appeared to me in her later life. They were large and well-shaped; their colour a reddish brown; but if the iris was closely examined, it appeared to be composed of a great variety of tints. The usual expression was of quiet, listening intelligence; but now and then, on some just occasion for vivid interest or wholesome indignation, a light would shine out, as if some spiritual lamp had been kindled, which glowed behind those expressive orbs. I never saw the like in any other human creature.

As for the rest of her features, they were plain, large, and ill set; but, unless you began to catalogue them, you were hardly aware of the fact, for the eyes and power of the countenance over-balanced every physical defect; the crooked mouth and the large nose were forgotten, and the whole face arrested the attention, and presently attracted all those whom she herself would have cared to attract. Her hands and feet were the smallest I ever saw; when one of the former was placed in mine, it was like the soft touch of a bird in the middle of my palm. The delicate long fingers had a peculiar fineness of sensation, which was one reason why all her handiwork, of whatever kind—writing, sewing, knitting—was so clear in its minuteness. She was remarkably neat in her whole personal attire; but she was dainty as to the fit of her shoes and gloves." [1]

Miss Brontë's second and last school was a happy one for her. In January, 1831, she went in a covered cart to Miss Wooler's school at Roehead, a cheerful country-house on the road from Leeds to Huddersfield. It was only twenty miles from Haworth, but in a different line of country. Charlotte found friends amongst the pupils, notably the E. of Mrs. Gaskell's biography, now known to us as Miss Ellen Nussey. The Rose and Jessie Yorke of "Shirley" were also at Roehead, and one of these it was who describes Charlotte's first arrival, looking very cold and miserable—short-sighted, shy, and nervous, and speaking, when she did speak, with a strong Irish accent. This last item in the account seems somewhat singular, but County Down is not easily shaken off.

However, as between an Irish and a Yorkshire accent, there can be no question which is the prettier. At first the new pupil was thought very ignorant, for "she had never learnt grammar at all, and very little geography," but then suddenly she would confound her critics by proving herself acquainted with things they had never handled. She knew the poetry books off by heart, and could tell stories about the authors and what other poems they had written. She likewise confided to her astonished associates that she too was an author, and not only she, but her brother and her two sisters—all three younger than herself. Play games was what she could not do, and to public scorn on that head she was totally indifferent. She was, however, fond of drawing, and knew what seemed a great deal about celebrated painters and pictures. A furious politician she ever was. As a nocturnal story-teller she was unsurpassable, and on one occasion, at all events, had the supreme satisfaction of causing one of her auditors to "scream out loud," and be "seized with violent palpitations." She was an indefatigable student and was soon recognized, despite her preliminary ignorances as the model scholar; so much so, that once when she got a bad mark for not knowing her Blair's Lectures on "Belles Lettres," the whole school revolted at the injustice, and the stigma had to be removed, that is, the bad mark taken off. This act of reparation was, however, considered tardy and incomplete, by the impetuosity of Rose Yorke, who for the rest of the term treated herself as released from all vows of obedience to the powers that had so betrayed their trust. In her judgment the "social contract" was dissolved, and

the girls restored to their primeval liberty. Fortunately for Miss Wooler the holidays were close at hand.

These days at Roehead as a school-girl were happy ones, eagerly spent in the acquisition of knowledge, and amongst congenial companions. Miss Wooler had many tales to tell of the stirring times in Yorkshire through which she had lived, of the misery of the working population, of a country-side ripe for revolution, of midnight drillings on the moors, and the burning of mills and breaking of machinery. And for these stories, one of her pupils at all events, had ready ears.

In 1832 Miss Brontë's schooldays came to an end, and she returned to the parsonage at Haworth. Here she and her sisters had drawing-lessons from a master, described by Mrs. Gaskell as being a man of talent, but very little principle, from which we are led to infer that his lack of principle in some way injured his pupils, or otherwise one hardly sees why so common a failing should be specially referred to. But upon what terms the girls were with their drawing-master I do not know. So far as his art was concerned, all readers of Charlotte's novels must recognize how powerfully imaginative landscape affected her mind, and is described by her. Her drawings, like her books, dealt with the realities of her own feelings. She does not, however, ever seem to have attained any technical skill beyond the ordinary. Drawing, walking, and reading, were at this time the pleasures of a life which at no time forgot its duties.

Miss Brontë must certainly be described as a voracious reader. Most things were grist that came to her mill, and this, notwithstanding that she always read with a sad

sincerity, and does not appear to have had any of that pleasant trifling literary spirit which accustoms itself to look upon a book as something quite outside the realm of morality and actual practice. There were some queer old volumes in the parsonage, coming from distant Cornwall, and stained with salt water—"mad Methodist magazines, full of miracles and apparitions, and preternatural warnings, ominous dreams, and frenzied fanaticisms." But it was not for nothing they had escaped the perils of the sea and travelled so far north. They had once fostered piety to the pitch of fanaticism—they were now to provoke genius and fever imagination. But Miss Brontë's taste always remained sane. She might sup on horrors, but no indigestion followed. Under date July 4, 1834, she wrote to Miss Nussey—

"You ask me to recommend you some books for your perusal. I will do so in as few words as I can. If you like poetry, let it be first-rate; Milton, Shakespeare, Thomson, Goldsmith, Pope (if you will, though I don't admire him), Scott, Byron, Campbell, Wordsworth, and Southey. Now don't be startled at the names of Shakespeare and Byron. Both these were great men, and their works are like themselves. You will know how to choose the good, and to avoid the evil; the finest passages are always the purest, the bad are invariably revolting; you will never wish to read them over twice. Omit the comedies of Shakespeare, and the 'Don Juan,' perhaps the 'Cain,' of Byron, though the latter is a magnificent poem, and read the rest fearlessly; that must indeed be a depraved mind which can gather evil from 'Henry VIII.,' from 'Richard III.,' from 'Macbeth,' and

'Hamlet,' and 'Julius Cæsar.' Scott's sweet, wild, romantic poetry can do you no harm. Nor can Wordsworth's, nor Campbell's, nor Southey's—the greatest part at least of his; some is certainly objectionable. For history, read Hume, Rollin, and the 'Universal History,' if you *can;* I never did. For fiction, read Scott alone; all novels after his are worthless. For biography, read Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets,' Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' Southey's 'Life of Nelson,' Lockhart's 'Life of Burns,' Moore's 'Life of Sheridan,' Moore's 'Life of Byron,' Wolfe's 'Remains.' For natural history, read Bewick and Audubon, and Goldsmith and White's 'History of Selborne.' For divinity, your brother will advise you there. I can only say, adhere to standard authors, and avoid novelty." [1]

It was all very well for Miss Brontë, writing *ex cathedrâ* to the "sensitive E.," to strike her pen through all the comedies of Shakespeare, but that she allowed her own more masculine self a greater latitude, and was well acquainted with the humours of the immortal knights—Sir John, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew—cannot be doubted.

Miss Nussey's visit to London greatly excited Charlotte Brontë's imagination. London had ever loomed large in the family fancy. Was it not the seat of Government, the theatre of the actions of the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Earl Grey, Mr. Stanley, Lord Brougham, and Mr. O'Connell, of the gods of her idolatry and the demons of her fancy? She writes:

"I was greatly amused at the tone of nonchalance which you assumed while treating of London and its

[1] G., 96.

wonders. Did you not feel awed while gazing at St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey? Had you no feeling of intense and ardent interest when in St. James's you saw the palace where so many of England's kings have held their courts, and beheld the representations of their persons on the walls? You should not be too much afraid of appearing *country-bred;* the magnificence of London has drawn exclamations of astonishment from travelled men, experienced in the world, its wonders and beauties. Have you yet seen anything of the great personages whom the sitting of Parliament now detains in London—the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Earl Grey, Mr. Stanley, Mr. O'Connell?"[1]

But despite these raptures, how sound is the advice with which the letter concludes:

"If I were you I would not be too anxious to spend my time in reading whilst in town. Make use of your own eyes for the purposes of observation now, and, for a time at least, lay aside the spectacles with which authors would furnish us."

When Miss Nussey returns from the "glare and glitter and dazzling display" of London with a disposition unchanged and a heart uncontaminated, her friend writes to her in the style of Julia Mannering to Matilda Marchmont, and congratulates her on withdrawing from the world a heart as unsophisticated, as natural, and as true as six months previously she had carried thither. Charlotte Brontë was a plain old-fashioned kind of person to look at, an undeniable oddity, one of the sort which is supposed to be well content if provided with a back seat

[1] G., 93.

from whence to witness the comedy of life; but within her glowed a spirit, a love of pomp and grandeur, of state and magnificence, that would have beggared the imagination of any living princess. Her fancy was easily fired, so too was her heart. She had flame enough in her composition to consume whole bevies of well-placed beauties.

The fondness for London was certainly promoted by the astonishing love her brother Branwell had for the great city, whose map he used so to study that he was able, years before his feet had ever trod her streets, to tell the bagmen he was accustomed to meet at the bar parlour of the Black Bull of Haworth, the shortest ways to their accustomed houses of call.

As for this unhappy Branwell, he was now hard upon eighteen, and was confidently regarded as the genius of the family—the man who was to make the name of Brontë famous. He had fiery red hair, and was full of Celtic glow and exuberance, and doubtless, had he been well bred and trained, and duly kicked and disciplined, he might have escaped a shocking fate and a disgraceful death. But it was not to be so, and his memory now craves that, of our charity, we leave it alone. When it has been once written that the Brontës had a brother who was their dream, their delusion, their despair, the rest may be forgotten, or, better still, never known. Moral discrimination is a thing rarely exercised, and people there still are unable to strike any important distinction between the misdeeds of Lord Byron and those of Shelley, and who visit both those poets either with the same blame, or, more hateful still, raise them to the same

pedestal. In the case of the men of achievement—men who have done something memorable, and upon whom therefore some sort of judgment must be passed—this state of things must continue until a day of enlightenment dawns; but when we have only to deal with a poor creature who, whatever may have been his promise, never did anything but get drunk, commit petty defalcations, write poor verses and odious letters, tell the most atrocious and heartless lies, and wellnigh break the hearts of three of the most self-sacrificing women ever called even by the name of sister, we are surely entitled to close the account at once and for ever.

At this time art was thought likely to provide Branwell with the necessary outlet for his genius, and that he had some talent in that direction may be easily believed. The question of ways and means arose, and took, as it generally does in families whose circumstances are straitened by the "eternal lack of pence," the shape of the inquiry, What sacrifices can the artist's sisters be called upon to make? Emily and Anne were as yet too young to do much; they themselves needed education to fit them for their own struggles; so it was obviously, as children say, "Charlotte's turn." On the 6th of July, 1835, she wrote from Haworth to say, that as it was proposed that Branwell should be placed at the Royal Academy, she was going to be a teacher at Roehead, Emily accompanying her as a pupil.

As a matter of fact Branwell never went as a pupil to the Royal Academy, but in July, 1835, Miss Brontë, being then nineteen, went as a teacher to Miss Wooler's, at Roehead, taking her sister Emily with her as a pupil.

Emily Brontë was now seventeen years old, and has been described as tall and well formed, and with eyes of remarkable beauty. Her figure was somewhat lank, her complexion colourless, her ideas about dress odd, her habits strange. Her most obvious gift was silence, and her most marked aversion strangers, amongst whom she included all near neighbours and her father's curates. Her sisters loved her intensely, so did her dogs. She, in her turn, loved her sisters and her dogs, and at one time her brother, with a silent passion. She also loved the moors far too well to bear being removed from them, even so far as Roehead. After three months she came home. Her elder sister, sticking herself to her post, recognized, not grudgingly, but with the love that has "forward-reaching" thoughts, how impossible it was for Emily to live away from home.

"My sister Emily loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her;—out of a sullen hollow in a livid hillside her mind could make an Eden. She found in the bleak solitude many and dear delights; and not the least and best-loved was—liberty. Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils; without it she perished. The change from her own home to a school, and from her own very noiseless, very secluded, but unrestricted and unartificial mode of life, to one of disciplined routine (though under the kindest auspices), was what she failed in enduring. Her nature proved here too strong for her fortitude. Every morning, when she woke, the vision of home and the moors rushed on her, and darkened and saddened the day that lay before her. Nobody knew what ailed her but me. I knew

only too well. In this struggle her health was quickly broken: her white face, attenuated form, and failing strength, threatened rapid decline. I felt in my heart she would die, if she did not go home, and with this conviction obtained her recall. She had only been three months at school; and it was some years before the experiment of sending her from home was again ventured on."[1]

As we read this passage it is natural to be reminded of Macaulay's beautiful and, in so unsentimental a man, strangely pathetic lines describing the feelings of the Yorkshire Jacobite wearing his soul out in Italy, who

> "Heard on Lavernia, Scargill's whispering trees,
> And pined by Arno for his lovelier Tees;
> Beheld each night his home in fevered sleep,
> Each morning started from the dream to weep:
> Till God, who saw him tried too sorely, gave
> The resting-place he asked, an early grave."

When Emily returned to Haworth it was not to idleness. She took upon herself, so we are told, the principal part of the cooking and all the household ironing —the most elegant of domestic employments—and, later on, when Tabby became infirm, she made the bread; and might have been seen "studying German out of an open book propped up before her, as she kneaded the dough": but, whatever the German may have been, the dough was always light—so, at least, Mrs. Gaskell assures us, I hope with authority. "No study, however interest-

[1] G., 101.

ing, interfered with the goodness of the bread, which was always light and excellent."

Miss Brontë's days at Roehead as a teacher would have been agreeable enough but for the fact that they fell during what may be called the "yeasty" period of her genius, and that she never had any turn for teaching or pleasure in the society of young people, simply as such. Consequently her leisure was disturbed by the doubts and fears that infest those whose dream is of literary fame—by the dread of what Keats called "the hell of failure"—and by the uneasy hope of the heaven of success. "If you knew my thoughts, the dreams that absorb me, and the fiery imagination that at times eats me up and makes me feel society as it is, wretchedly insipid, you would pity and, I daresay, despise me." So she wrote in May, 1836. Neither did she find in her school work the labour that eases pain. None the less, she performed it bravely. But it was always so with Charlotte Brontë. Her reason looked on tempests, but was never shaken. Religious depression she appears occasionally to have experienced, although it is not easy to apprehend her position through life in the matter of religion. She certainly had none of the spirit of the devotee, and her mental atmosphere was altogether too bleak to admit of that "small-soul culture" now so much recommended. Miss Brontë's religion seems to have consisted of a robust Church of Englandism, made up of cleanliness, good works, and hatred of humbug—all admirable things certainly, but not specially religious.

She was, however, acquainted partially with doctrinal differences, and was known, during the period now under

view, to condemn Socinianism and Calvinism. She must be pronounced an Arminian, and was, I doubt not, an Erastian also. Her sister Emily was more reticent, and all that she was ever heard to say on religious subjects was (whilst lying at full length on the hearthrug): "That's right." Nor does this single expression of opinion, emphatic though it be, tell us much; for the conduct it approved of was her friend's refusal to state what her own religious opinions were.

During the Christmas holidays of 1836 the girls again met in their beloved Haworth. They had much to talk about. No need now to draw upon their fervent imaginations, no occasion "to make out" anything, or to fancy themselves inhabiting beautiful islands of the main, in company with the men, women, and books, they most admired or loved. There was no lack of matter to talk about.

What were they to do? Their father had the income, and the claims upon that income of a poor parson, and nothing else. Their aunt had an annuity of £50 a year. Something had to be done. There was teaching. Both Charlotte and Emily had tried this—the former at Roehead, the latter for a few months at Halifax. For Emily it was an impossible life; for Charlotte a hateful, and also a hopeless one. To her friend "Mary" Miss Brontë had owned that, after clothing herself and her sister Anne, she had nothing left out of her Roehead salary. No wonder that, during these Christmas holidays, they paced up and down the room "making plans for the future." No wonder either that their thoughts flew to the "El Dorado" of literature, where, before their time as since,

bold adventurers have carried their light fancies, and returned home laden with the precious metal. They had all, Branwell included, written verses, and they thought they could not be better introduced into literature than through that medium. Accordingly Charlotte, "as the eldest," wrote to Southey, on the 29th of December, 1836, a letter, which—as the writer was at that time under the detestable influence of her brother's style—was not likely to avoid serious faults. The letter was accompanied by some poems. Branwell, at the same time, despatched some of his poems to Wordsworth. No answer being received from Southey, who was away from home, and the Christmas holidays coming to an end, poor Miss Brontë had to pack her box and go back to Miss Wooler's school, no longer at pleasant Roehead, but at Dewsbury Moor. Here it was, in the month of March, that she received Southey's letter. He wrote—as Southey always did write—kindly, wisely, gravely, yet forbiddingly. It must be remembered in reading the letter, which has been printed both in Southey's "Life and Correspondence" and in Mrs. Gaskell's biography, that he had only before him specimens of his correspondent's poetry. "Do not suppose," he said, "that I disparage the gift you possess; nor that I would discourage you from exercising it. . . . Write poetry for its own sake, not in a spirit of emulation, and not with a view to celebrity; the less you aim at that, the more likely you will be to observe, and finally to obtain it."

Miss Brontë replied:—

"SIR,—I cannot rest till I have answered your letter,

even though, by addressing you a second time, I should appear a little intrusive; but I must thank you for the kind and wise advice you have condescended to give me. I had not ventured to hope for such a reply: so considerate in its tone, so noble in its spirit. I must suppress what I feel, or you will think me foolishly enthusiastic.

"At the first perusal of your letter, I felt only shame and regret that I had ever ventured to trouble you with my crude rhapsody; I felt a painful heat rise to my face when I thought of the quires of paper I had covered with what once gave me so much delight, but which now was only a source of confusion: but after I had thought a little, and read it again and again, the prospect seemed to clear. You do not forbid me to write; you do not say that what I write is utterly destitute of merit. You only warn me against the folly of neglecting real duties for the sake of imaginative pleasures; for the love of fame; for the selfish excitement of emulation. You kindly allow me to write poetry for its own sake, provided I leave undone nothing which I ought to do, in order to pursue that single, absorbing, exquisite gratification. I am afraid, sir, you think me very foolish. I know the first letter I wrote to you was all senseless trash from beginning to end; but I am not altogether the idle dreaming being it would seem to denote. My father is a clergyman of limited, though competent, income, and I am the eldest of his children. He expended quite as much in my education as he could afford in justice to the rest. I thought it therefore my duty, when I left school, to become a governess. In that capacity I find enough

to occupy my thoughts all day long, and my head and hands too, without having a moment's time for one dream of the imagination. In the evenings, I confess, I do think, but I never trouble any one else with my thoughts. I carefully avoid any appearance of pre-occupation and eccentricity, which might lead those I live amongst to suspect the nature of my pursuits. Following my father's advice—who from my childhood has counselled me, just in the wise and friendly tone of your letter—I have endeavoured not only attentively to observe all the duties a woman ought to fulfil, but to feel deeply interested in them. I don't always succeed, for sometimes when I'm teaching or sewing I would rather be reading or writing. But I try to deny myself, and my father's approbation amply rewarded me for the privation. Once more allow me to thank you with sincere gratitude. I trust I shall never more feel ambitious to see my name in print. If the wish should rise, I'll look at Southey's letter, and suppress it. It is honour enough for me that I have written to him, and received an answer. That letter is consecrated; no one shall ever see it but papa and my brother and sisters. Again I thank you. This incident, I suppose, will be renewed no more; if I live to be an old woman, I shall remember it thirty years hence as a bright dream. The signature which you suspected of being fictitious is my real name. Again, therefore, I must sign myself,

"C. BRONTË.

"P.S.—Pray, sir, excuse me for writing to you a second time. I could not help writing—partly to tell you how thankful I am for your kindness, and partly to

let you know that your advice shall not be wasted, however sorrowfully and reluctantly it may be at first followed.[1] "C. B."

Southey's reply requires to be read :—

"Keswick, *March* 22, 1837.

"Dear Madam,—Your letter has given me great pleasure, and I should not forgive myself if I did not tell you so. You have received admonition as considerately and as kindly as it was given. Let me now request that if you ever should come to these Lakes while I am living here you will let me see you. You would think of me afterwards with the more goodwill, because you would perceive that there is neither severity nor moroseness in the state of mind to which years and observation have brought me.

"It is, by God's mercy, in our power to attain a degree of self-government, which is essential to our own happiness, and contributes greatly to that of those around us. Take care of over-excitement, and endeavour to keep a quiet mind (even for your health it is the best advice that can be given you). Your moral and spiritual improvement will then keep pace with the culture of your intellectual powers.

"And now, Madam, God bless you! Farewell, and believe me to be, your sincere friend,

"Robert Southey."

This is indeed an admirable correspondence on both

[1] G., 116, 117.

sides. It is full of the stern, almost ruthless, good sense and soberness, which Charlotte Brontë, despite her tempestuous soul, stormy imagination, and passionate writing, always loved, and took as her rule of living; but when we remember she was but twenty-one when she wrote her second letter to Southey, we feel that the iron had entered somewhat too deeply into her soul.

Literature being thus put aside, Miss Brontë continued, though with a heavy heart and failing health and spirits, to teach Miss Wooler's pupils, amongst whom was now her sister Anne. Anne Brontë can never be to any of us what her sisters are, her literary faculty being but slender, but whilst living she played an important part in the family life. She and Emily were the fastest friends. Alone amongst the sisters Anne had enough religion to give her pleasure, and her spirit grew devout. But in 1837 she was young, even for her years, and timid.

The Christmas of 1837 saw them all again at Haworth, quiet, sadder even than before, but with wills unsubdued, as the following pleasing incident most satisfactorily establishes. Poor Tabby fell down the steep slippery village street and broke her leg. She was nearly seventy years of age, past her work, and had a sister living in the village. Miss Branwell, a by no means superseded personage, decided that Tabby should go and live with this sister. Mr. Brontë was at first unwilling, but finally consented, and the girls were informed that the ancient Tabitha, once queen of the kitchen, and kindly tyrant of their early life, was to leave the parsonage. They remonstrated. Tabby had nursed them; they would nurse Tabby. Their remonstrances being

unheeded, their arguments left unanswered, they proceeded, in the language of to-day, to boycott the baker, or, as Mrs. Gaskell puts it, they struck eating till the aghast authorities gave them their own way, and allowed Tabby to remain where she was.

The holidays over, Miss Brontë went back to Dewsbury Moor alone, for Anne's health was too feeble to admit of her return. It must have been a cruel parting, but it was not for long, for Miss Brontë's health entirely broke down, and the doctor who was called in gave her the only prescription that could have done her the least good—sent her home again.

She soon became herself once more, paid one or two visits, and had friends at the parsonage. About this time it was that she encountered some one supposed to be the St. John of "Jane Eyre," and like him a clergyman. He had the good sense to recognize the greatness of Charlotte Brontë, and proposed marriage; but she, a poor hard-worked teacher, who hated her business, would have none of him, spick and span parson though he was. She writes thus:

"*March* 12, 1839.

. . . "I had a kindly leaning towards him, because he is an amiable and well-disposed man. Yet I had not, and could not have, that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him; and if ever I marry, it must be in that light of adoration that I will regard my husband. Ten to one I shall never have the chance again; ~~but *n'importe*~~. Moreover, I was aware that he knew so little of me he could hardly be conscious to whom he was writing. Why! it would startle him to see

me in my natural home character; he would think I was a wild, romantic enthusiast indeed. I could not sit all day long making a grave face before my husband. I would laugh, and satirize, and say whatever came into my head first. And if he were a clever man, and loved me, the whole world, weighed in the balance against his smallest wish, should be light as air." [1]

The matrimonial profession thus rejected, another had to be adopted, and both Charlotte and Anne decided to be governesses in families. It was a desperate choice, so far as the former was concerned, and simply meant that there was nothing else for her to be. The "El Dorado" of literature was jealously guarded by forbidding angels—she had Southey's stringent letter in her pocket, and though it is not to be supposed that she had really and as it were for ever abandoned the immortal hope of some day writing something the world would not willingly let die, still the hour had not come to conquer discouragement. Art was out of the question. Music was not one of Charlotte Brontë's accomplishments, Mrs. Gaskell even going so far as to give vent to a distressing doubt whether "Charlotte could play at all." There was therefore nothing for it but plain teaching. Still it was an unhappy choice, for, as has been frequently remarked, Miss Brontë did not care for children. She had no eye for them. Hence it comes about that her novel-children are not good. Mr. Swinburne, in his delightful "Note on Charlotte Brontë," which should be read by everybody, has said pretty well all that need be said on the subject. Miss Brontë had not on her small

[1] G., 125.

but wonder-opening bunch the tiny key that unlocks the heart of childhood. As she glances upon children she seems to say: "Wait, little one, wait awhile; till your eager heart has been bruised in the ceaseless strife of the affections; till the garden of your soul is strewn with withered hopes; till you have become familiar with disappointment, and know the face of sorrow; and then, if you seek me out, we shall have much to say to one another; not of foolish sentiment or Byronic gloom, but downright vigorous good sense, and pinching of each other's delusions."

Miss Brontë's first place was in the family of a Yorkshire manufacturer. She was very unhappy, but to record the story of her captivity would be too sickening. One of the pleasantest afternoons she spent during the three months of her torment was when the father of the family took his children out for a walk, accompanied by his Newfoundland dog bounding in front, and his governess, who had orders to follow a little behind. Miss Brontë, however, does not seem to have minded, and indeed states that her employer "looked very like what a frank, wealthy Conservative gentleman ought to be."

She left this place in July, having lost all her health and spirits, and came back to the parsonage, where she quickly regained both—too much of the latter indeed for the peace of mind of an Irish curate, who was brought one day by his vicar to pay a call at Haworth Parsonage. After the manner of his kind he made himself at home; but Miss Brontë must tell her own tale:

"I have an odd circumstance to relate to you; prepare for a hearty laugh! The other day Mr. ——, a vicar,

came to spend the day with us, bringing with him his own curate. The latter gentleman, by name Mr. B., is a young Irish clergyman, fresh from Dublin University. It was the first time we had any of us seen him, but, however, after the manner of his countrymen, he soon made himself at home. His character quickly appeared in his conversation; witty, lively, ardent, clever too; but deficient in the dignity and discretion of an Englishman. At home, you know, I talk with ease, and am never shy, never weighed down and oppressed by that miserable *mauvaise honte* which torments and constrains me elsewhere. So I conversed with this Irishman, and laughed at his jests; and, though I saw faults in his character, excused them because of the amusement his originality afforded. I cooled a little, indeed, and drew in towards the latter part of the evening, because he began to season his conversation with something of Hibernian flattery, which I did not quite relish. However, they went away, and no more was thought about them. A few days after I got a letter, the direction of which puzzled me, it being in a hand I was not accustomed to see. Evidently it was neither from you nor Mary, my only correspondents. Having opened and read it, it proved to be a declaration of attachment and proposal of matrimony, expressed in the ardent language of the sapient young Irishman! I hope you are laughing heartily. This is not like one of my adventures, is it? It more nearly resembles Martha's. I am certainly doomed to be an old maid. Never mind. I made up my mind to that fate ever since I was twelve years old."[1]

[1] G., 133.

This story has its biographical value, since it shows, what readers of Mrs. Gaskell's biography are sometimes tempted to forget, that Charlotte Brontë was, at convenient times and in proper places, a lively and fascinating person, even in the eyes of strangers.

But refusing the clergy, however inspiriting as a pastime, has no merits as a means of livelihood, and accordingly, after a visit to the sea at Easton, we find her writing:

"I intend to force myself to take another situation when I can get one, though I *hate* and *abhor* the very thoughts of governess-ship. But I must do it; and therefore I heartily wish I could hear of a family where they need such a commodity as a governess."[1]

[1] G., 136.

CHAPTER VI.

THE year 1840 was spent at home—the mornings in household pursuits and duties, and the evenings in reading and in planning and plotting over that mysterious heap of disagreeable possibilities we are accustomed to call, compendiously, the Future. Charlotte Brontë dealt sternly with herself in this matter. Like her heroines, Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, she had the habit of making an inventory of her charms and accomplishments, good looks and graces, powers of mind and body, and marking herself very low. She made no large demands upon the world, and expected nothing she did not first pay for in brains and work. She was not dandled and danced into literature like some of our sprightly young authors who try to make up for the native lightness of their hearts by the desperate character of their plots and the ferocity of their literary language. During this winter Miss Brontë began a story in her minutest hand, and writ in a style which afterwards became her aversion—"the ornamental and redundant style." The beginning of this story she sent, with the extraordinary audacity of a young author—an audacity able even to conquer the abnormal shyness and independence of her non-professional character—to

Wordsworth anonymously, and subsequently followed it up with a letter composed in a vein she had been taught by her brother to regard as manly and vigorous, but which is really only smart to vulgarity. Miss Brontë's notions of a man's style never got quite quit of this early taint. This story did not proceed very far.

There was a good deal of reading done this year at the parsonage, forty French novels arriving in one batch. Unfortunately we are not told their names, but only that, "like the rest, they are clever, wicked, sophistical, and immoral." And then she adds: "The best of it is, they give one a thorough idea of France and Paris"—a sweeping statement which may safely be met with a point-blank denial. There is more validity in her second reason for reading so many "clever, wicked, sophistical, and immoral books," namely, that they are the best substitute for French conversation that she had met with.

All this time, however, she was looking out for a situation, and answering advertisements without number. "A woman of the name of Mrs. B——, it seems, wants a teacher. I wish she would have me."

However, on investigation Mrs. B—— proved to be one of those persons who want their children taught music and singing, so nothing came of that; but in March, 1841, Miss Brontë went out again, and for the last time, as a governess. On this occasion she got into a pleasant house, though her duties were multifarious, and involved "needlework." Her salary was £20 nominally, really £16. Her pupils were two, a girl of eight and a boy of six. There is something half amusing, half distressing, in the way Miss Brontë talks of her young clients. They

might be a superior kind of wild beast. "My pupils are wild and unbroken, but apparently well-disposed." A little boy of six is not, as a rule, spoken of quite so solemnly. "I find it so hard," she writes, "to repel the rude familiarity of children." "The children are over-indulged, and consequently hard to manage." "I have got on very well with the servants and children so far, yet it is dreary, solitary work."

It was just as well this sort of thing came to an end once and for all at the Christmas of 1841. Her employers were fond of her, and felt the parting. Miss Brontë observed with her accustomed truthfulness and insight into her own character. "They only made too much of me. I did not deserve it."

What led her to give up the situation was that she had obtained the necessary consents and assistance to enable her and her sister Emily to go abroad for a while to perfect themselves in French and to learn German, in the hope that so equipped they might, on their return, keep a school of their own. This project had been slowly maturing during the last half of 1841.

On the 18th of July Miss Brontë wrote: "To come to the point. Papa and aunt talk by fits and starts of our—*id est*, Emily, Anne, and myself—commencing a school."

In August she was back at her situation, and received a letter from Brussels, written by her old friend Mary, the Rose Yorke of "Shirley." This set her imagination off upon its travels.

"Mary's letters spoke of some of the pictures and cathedrals she had seen—pictures the most exquisite, cathedrals the most venerable. I hardly know what

swelled to my throat as I read her letter: such a vehement impatience of restraint and steady work; such a strong wish for wings—wings such as wealth can furnish; such an urgent thirst to see, to know, to learn. Something internal seemed to expand bodily for a minute. I was tantalized by the consciousness of faculties unexercised. Then all collapsed, and I despaired. My dear, I would hardly make that confession to any one but yourself; and to you, rather in a letter than *vivâ voce*. These rebellious and absurd emotions were only momentary; I quelled them in five minutes. I hope they will not revive, for they were acutely painful."[1]

Miss Wooler being at this time about to give up her school, it occurred to her that the Brontës might take it. Thereupon Charlotte addressed to Miss Branwell the following letter:—

"*Sept.* 29, 1841.

"DEAR AUNT,

"I have heard nothing of Miss Wooler yet, since I wrote to her intimating that I would accept her offer. I cannot conjecture the reason of this long silence, unless some unforeseen impediment has occurred in concluding the bargain. Meantime, a plan has been suggested and approved by Mr. and Mrs. ——" (the father and mother of her pupils) "and others, which I wish now to impart to you. My friends recommend me, if I desire to secure permanent success, to delay commencing the school for six months longer, and by all means to contrive, by hook or by crook, to spend the intervening time in some school on the Continent. They say schools in England are so

[1] G., 154.

numerous, competition so great, that without some such step towards attaining superiority we shall probably have a very hard struggle, and may fail in the end. They say, moreover, that the loan of £100, which you have been so kind as to offer us, will, perhaps, not be all required now, as Miss Wooler will lend us the furniture; and that, if the speculation is intended to be a good and successful one, half the sum, at least, ought to be laid out in the manner I have mentioned, thereby insuring a more speedy repayment both of interest and principal.

"I would not go to France or to Paris. I would go to Brussels, in Belgium. The cost of the journey there, at the dearest rate of travelling, would be £5. Living is there little more than half as dear as it is in England, and the facilities for education are equal or superior to any other place in Europe. In half a year I could acquire a thorough familiarity with French. I could improve greatly in Italian, and even get a dash of German, *i.e.*, providing my health continued as good as it is now. Mary is now staying at Brussels, at a first-rate establishment there. I should not think of going to the Château de Kokleberg, where she is resident, as the terms are much too high; but if I wrote to her, she, with the assistance of Mrs. Jenkins, the wife of the British chaplain, would be able to secure me a cheap, decent residence and respectable protection. I should have the opportunity of seeing her frequently; she would make me acquainted with the city; and, with the assistance of her cousins, I should probably be introduced to connections far more improving, polished, and cultivated than any I have yet known.

"These are advantages which would turn to real account, when we actually commenced a school; and, if Emily could share them with me, we could take a footing in the world afterwards which we can never do now. I say Emily instead of Anne; for Anne might take her turn at some future period, if our school answered. I feel certain, while I am writing, that you will see the propriety of what I say. You always like to use your money to the best advantage. You are not fond of making shabby purchases. When you do confer a favour, it is often done in style; and, depend upon it, £50 or £100 thus laid out would be well employed. Of course, I know no other friend in the world to whom I could apply on this subject except yourself. I feel an absolute conviction that, if this advantage were allowed us, it would be the making of us for life. Papa will, perhaps, think it a wild and ambitious scheme; but who ever rose in the world without ambition? When he left Ireland to go to Cambridge University he was as ambitious as I am now. I want us *all* to get on. I know we have talents, and I want them to be turned to account. I look to you, aunt, to help us. I think you will not refuse. I know, if you consent, it shall not be my fault if you repent your kindness."[1]

Miss Branwell, who was a most sensible woman, took time to consider and finally consented, and after divers plans and prospects, it came about that early in 1842 Mr. Brontë, Charlotte, and Emily, accompanied by Mary and her brother, arrived in London *en route* for M. Heger's *pensionnat*, in the Rue d'Isabelle, Brussels.

[1] G., 156.

This was Miss Brontë's first visit to London. They stayed at the Chapter Coffee House, Paternoster Row —an old-fashioned house which, it appears, had been visited by Mr. Brontë in his old Cambridge and Essex days. Here they lay under the shadow of the great Dome.

"I had just extinguished my candle and laid down, when a deep, low, mighty tone swung through the night. At first I knew it not; but it was uttered twelve times and at the twelfth colossal hum and tumbling knell I said, 'I lie in the shadow of St. Paul's.'"[1]

The journey to Brussels safely accomplished, Mr. Brontë, after the stay of a single night in the strange city, returned straight home to Yorkshire.

In writing of this Brussels life of Charlotte Brontë, the biographer feels himself on enchanted ground. The prosy methods of plain narration—the straightforward falsehoods of conventional biography, are more than usually repulsive—for the fact is that the lady herself has taken the matter in hand, and he who would know as no biographer can tell him, the history of her life and read the record of her heart during this strange period of her existence must, laying aside all else, set himself to read "Villette."

But though the student of Charlotte Brontë, and those who would know as much as is to be known of her life and history, will read "Villette" between the lines, and carry away what they cannot doubt to be true information concerning its author from the pages of this marvellous novel, none the less will they, if they are wise, nay, if they

[1] "Villette."

are delicate, hold their tongues about their discoveries, real or supposed, and their surmises, however shrewd or keen. It is not admirable to seek to wrest the secrets of a woman's heart from the works of her genius. The great artists do not "abide our question." We can never put them into the box. They live their own lives quite independently of their works. We may be quite certain that there never was anybody more unlike Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, than William Shakespeare, owner of the "trimmest house in Stratford town." But with those who, skilful or powerful as they may be in certain directions, have not attained to this rank, the case is different; and it is not always possible for them to maintain unbroken the barrier between their lives and their art. Still both biographers and critics, birds of prey though they be, ought to regard and respect the inherent distinctions that must exist between the actual facts and feelings of a person's life and the record of an imaginary, though it may be similar, life. We may feel certain that Miss Bronte put her own life into her novels—in fact, the conviction that she did so seriously interferes with the artistic merit of her writings. It sounds paradoxical, but is a familiar truism, that we do not want a story to be true. We dislike to think it has actually happened. Even Mr. Wilkie Collins' method of telling his stories in a series of affidavits depends for its charm upon the reader's knowledge that no such affidavits were ever sworn, and that the deponents are jointly and severally dreams. A great novelist does not find, he brings. He invents, for our edification or delight, for our laughter or terror, characters who we know

never existed—scenes we know the earth never witnessed; but which being constructed and composed in accordance with the rules and limitations of his art (and the greater the artist the more willingly does he submit to this sweet servitude) affect us far more than the history of events which, in Charles Reade's witty phrase, have gone through the formality of taking place.

Had Miss Brontë been a greater novelist than she was, "Villette" would not have the biographical interest it has, but such biographical interest as it has may safely and properly be left to its readers to explore and expound for themselves.

When Charlotte and Emily Brontë came into residence at M. Heger's school, there were from eighty to a hundred pupils, for the most part Belgians, big, strapping girls with large appetites, boisterous ways, and a not unnatural attachment to that form of Christianity which is still most prevalent, but with which Charlotte Brontë had never any patience. She always seems to be half resentful that Roman Catholic girls should be Roman Catholics. M. Heger's two English pupils were exiles in a far land, but unlike most exiles they were hard-workers and desperately bent on acquiring information, which in their case meant a decent knowledge of the French, and, if possible, of the German language. They were decidedly two queer young women. M. Heger was greatly struck with them, and devised a new method for teaching them. This he expounded, and paused for a reply. Emily was the first to speak. She said she saw no good in the plan, and evinced a desire to argue the

subject at length, for though taciturn, she had a head for logic and dialectical gifts. But M. Heger had, he said, no time for argument, and invited Charlotte to express her opinion, which was that she also doubted the wisdom of the plan, but would follow it, because, being M. Heger's pupil, she was bound to obey him. An ordinary teacher would have been somewhat damped by this truly British way of meeting his proposals, but M. Heger was no ordinary teacher, and made even Emily Brontë, the most untamed of mortals, do his will. Under this fiery but delightful enthusiast both sisters made very considerable progress, nor were their imaginations ever allowed to slumber. Mrs. Gaskell gives a most interesting account of the methods M. Heger pursued.

The original intention of the two sisters was to remain abroad six months, and consequently to return home before the autumn holidays, but they had made themselves sufficiently useful to induce Madame Heger to offer to retain them for another half year, Charlotte teaching English, and Emily music. The offer was accepted, not apparently with much emotion, but because under the circumstances it was the wisest thing to do. The ugliest feature of the case was that it meant the sacrifice of their holidays and any sight of their home.

"That little spot
With grey walls compassed round,"

that was always so indescribably dear to them. But, as Miss Brontë observes in one of her downright poems :

"There's no use in weeping:
Though we are condemned to part,
There's such a thing as keeping
A remembrance in one's heart."

The sisters remained together at M. Heger's until October, 1842, when they were hastily summoned home by news that their aunt was very ill, and before they had started they heard of her death. They went back to Haworth as quickly as they could. The good aunt had left her savings to be equally divided between her three Brontë nieces and another. Branwell is sometimes said to have been struck out of her will, but, in fact, he was never in it, save in what is called in legal phrase, "a gift over." Once more the three sisters spent the Christmas holidays together. Anne had a situation as a governess, to which she proposed to return. Emily had had enough of Brussels, and meant to be the "home-keeping" sister. What was Charlotte to do? For once forgetful or neglectful of her stern rule of life, that if ever you really want to do a thing you may be certain it is wrong, she did what she wanted to do, and returned to Brussels. "I returned to Brussels after aunt's death, against my conscience, prompted by what then seemed an irresistible impulse. I was punished for my selfish folly by a total withdrawal for more than two years of happiness and peace of mind."

The whole of the year 1843 was spent by Charlotte Brontë at M. Heger's, where she continued her duties as English teacher, at the same time improving her French and German. Her salary was £16 a year, out of which she had to pay for her German lessons. She also gave

English lessons to M. Heger himself and his brother-in-law. The former was an especially apt pupil.[1]

The long vacation of 1843 was a terrible time for Miss Brontë. She spent it alone in the deserted school, with only one teacher, and she an uncongenial foreigner, for a companion. Heart-sick, home-sick, baffled in all directions, her youth leaving her and nothing done, the ruin of her brother an accomplished fact, weary all day yet sleepless at night, the heavy hours with clogged wheels went by. But here, as always during this Brussels period, we must turn to "Villette" for her true history. The visit to the Confessional, described in the sixteenth chapter, is taken direct from an experience of Miss Brontë's own.

The end of the holidays was most welcome, and the return of the Belgian girls, "cold, selfish, animal, and inferior" though they were, was hailed with joy by their tortured English teacher, whose mind had been thus cruelly kept upon the rack.

But both in holiday-time and school-time Brussels was a disappointing failure. It was not what it had been on the former occasion, nor what she hoped it would be when, against the voice of conscience, she returned alone after her aunt's death. Madame Heger became estranged. Miss Brontë got on better with the husband. In fact, though her shyness stood in the way of her wishes, Miss Brontë was one of those women whose sympathies go out easier to men than to those of

[1] Miss Brontë wrote to Miss Nussey in April, 1843, a letter which should be read. It will be found on page 190 of Mrs. Gaskell's Life.

their own sex, and whose intellects work better and whose thoughts flash brighter in male than in female company. One remembers Martha, in Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford," who found that usage of polite society which, as expounded to her by Miss Matty, required her, in her capacity of table-maid, to help the ladies before the gentlemen, both irksome and absurd, for as she frankly avowed, "I like the lads best!" For reasons probably very different from Martha's, who, though she was a good, was not an intellectual girl, Miss Brontë arrived (so I suggest) at the same conclusion.

Madame Heger was also, besides being a woman, as determined a Roman Catholic as was Charlotte a fierce Protestant. Sympathy between them was impossible. Madame Heger, in the opinion of her pupil-teacher, was an idolater; and what Miss Brontë was in Madame Heger's "it is better only guessing." Under these conditions a parting was desirable, and happily inevitable. It came suddenly at the end of 1843. It cost a good deal when it came, but the price was paid, the deed done, and on the 2nd of January, 1844, Charlotte Bronte was once more under the sheltering roof of her old home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE year 1844 was spent at home, planning for school-keeping at Haworth, and distributing cards of terms, but nothing came of either plans or cards. Branwell's condition was now a chronic source of misery, and as the parsonage had to be his home as well as his sisters', its unfitness for a school became only too painfully obvious. It was a sad and weary time of waiting for the moving of the waters. We listen to the old cry, "Life wears away. I shall soon be thirty. I have done nothing yet." Meantime she read to her father, whose sight became bad, and performed her accustomed household duties. Poor Anne alone of the family was still away somewhere as a governess.

Old Tabby was now past her work, but unwilling to resign it, and possessed of "feelings" capable of indefinite suffering had it been so much as hinted to her that the peeling of potatoes was a pursuit requiring keener eyes than were now hers. And so, Mrs. Gaskell tells us, Charlotte Brontë was accustomed to bide her time, and when the cook's back was turned "steal into the kitchen," and carry off the bowl of vegetables, and re-peel the potatoes, all unbeknown to poor Tabitha. The subtle

delicacy of this act of kindness is akin to the feeling which induced Dr. Johnson to do all the necessary shopping for his cat "Hodge"; he fearing that were the task of buying oysters (not then at modern prices) for his friend's consumption imposed upon "Black Frank," that negro might learn to hate, and even (on the sly) to kick "Hodge"; an intolerable thought that always drove the doctor into Fleet Street as far as the nearest fishmongers. Happy Hodge and happy Tabitha to have respectively had such a master and such a mistress!

But this exquisite tenderness of heart was quite as compatible in Miss Brontë's case, as it was in that of our dearly beloved doctor's, with modes of expression energetic to roughness. The following passage is in Johnson's best style:

. . . "Ten years ago I should have laughed at your account of the blunder you made in mistaking the bachelor doctor for a married man. I should have certainly thought you scrupulous over-much, and wondered how you could possibly regret being civil to a decent individual, merely because he happened to be single instead of double. Now however I can perceive that your scruples are founded on common sense. I know that if women wish to escape the stigma of husband-seeking, they must act and look like marble or clay—cold, expressionless, bloodless; for every appearance of feeling, of joy, sorrow, friendliness, antipathy, admiration, disgust, are alike construed by the world into the attempt to hook a husband. Never mind! well-meaning women have their own consciences to comfort

them after all. Do not therefore be too much afraid of showing yourself as you are, affectionate and good-hearted; do not too harshly repress sentiments and feelings excellent in themselves because you fear that some puppy may fancy that you are letting them come out to fascinate him; do not condemn yourself to live only by halves, because if you showed too much animation some pragmatical thing in breeches might take it into his pate to imagine that you designed to dedicate your life to his inanity. Still, a composed, decent, equable deportment is a capital treasure to a woman, and that you possess. Write again soon, for I feel rather fierce, and want stroking down."[1]

The year 1845 passed much as did its predecessor, save that the gloom thickened. Branwell Brontë was now permanently at home—an opium-eater and a drunkard. Delirium tremens with its attendant horrors turned the beloved Haworth parsonage from a home into a hospital. Old Mr. Brontë maintained his courage, though it has been hinted that he was once a source of anxiety, nor did either Charlotte or Emily lose their nerve. Fortitude, and a certain grim contempt for weakness, that teeming parent of misery, became now the very atmosphere of Miss Brontë's life. This discipline continued till September, 1848, when Branwell died, and it became possible, forgetting his vices, "to remember only his woes."

It was in the autumn of 1845 that Charlotte Brontë accidentally lighted upon a volume of her sister Emily's

[1] G., 212.

verses. She read them, as she read everything, with stern good sense, and became convinced that they were not at all like the poetry women generally write, but "condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine." Charlotte was the publishing genius of the family, and but for her honest determination to get into print we should probably never have had verse or prose of her sister's. It took days to persuade Emily Brontë that her verses ought to be printed and sold to that public she abhorred. Anne Brontë, who composed easily, and had a pleasant flow of pretty words and tender imagery, hearing the conversation turn on verses, "quickly produced some of her own compositions." Charlotte herself had poems by her. It was indeed high time they became authors, even though they had to pay for it. Now it was they hit upon the names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell—happy names, hiding the secret of sex, and telling the world nothing about its three new poets.

Publisher-hunting is poor sport at all seasons, depressing to the spirits and irritating for the temper; but when the author comes with his literary wares in one hand and the expenses of publication in the other, his path is wonderfully smoothed, and he soon holds in his hand his heart's desire.

After applying to Messrs. Chambers, of Edinburgh, for advice as to how to proceed in such a matter, and receiving and acting upon it, Miss Brontë put herself into communication, in January, 1846, with Messrs. Aylott and Jones,[1] of Paternoster Row, who undertook for the

[1] The memory of this firm keeps a spot green in the minds of "the precious" of our acquaintance, as having been the publishers of "The Germ."

sum of £31 10s. to bring out the slender volume, which they duly did about the merry month of May.

The poems of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell make a pleasant-looking little book, a 12mo of 165 pages. It contains, so far as I have discovered, not more than half-a-dozen of those misprints so maddening to the young author. There are sixty-one poems, nineteen of Currer Bell's and twenty-one each of Ellis and Acton Bell's. The sisters now awaited the voice of doom, as pronounced by the critical journals. These organs were in no hurry. Only two pounds had been spent in advertising, and authors who do not advertise must bide their time. *The Athenæum*, of the 4th of July, 1846, however, having occasion to review a batch of what is now called "Minor Poetry," but was then called by an odd misnomer "Poetry for the Million," referred to the little volume in kind and discriminating language. Commercially the book was a failure—that is to say, enough copies were not sold to recoup the authors the £31 10s. they paid to have it printed—but the present cash value of a poem or of a volume of poems is never any test of its real value. Poetry stays with us; novels, essays, and wares of that kind soon drop out; for the reason that it is next to impossible to keep alive their tradition. We may remember vaguely that early in the sixties we read a novel whose title we have forgotten, but which was not at all bad, and would certainly be popular were it republished; but such memories are futile. Who now reads "The Bachelor of the Albany"? A favourite poem, on the other hand, enters into our being, and we become centres of contagion. Where we go it goes;

those who know us, know it. A poem needs but a dozen missionaries to be spread from pole to pole.

Did we want a judgment severely truthful upon this little volume we should find it in the words of the eldest contributor: "The book was printed; it is scarcely known; and all of it that merits to be known are the poems of Ellis Bell."

Charlotte Brontë probably never realized what a serious thing it is to be a poet, or even to write poetry. She regarded poetry as a mode of expressing herself always quite open to her whenever she chose to give it the preference over prose. Her verses therefore are articles of manufacture, the poetry of commerce, and must be classed accordingly. They are certainly made of good materials—sound sense, fortitude, and affection. Occasionally a friendly reader will discern traces of a happier mood, when she ceases to be a manufacturer, and almost becomes a singer. One or two of the following stanzas are surely good:—

WINTER STORES.

We take from life our little share,
And say that this shall be
A space, redeemed from toil and care,
From tears and sadness free.

And, haply Death unstrings his bow,
And sorrow stands apart;
And for a little while we know
The sunshine of the heart.

But Time, though viewlessly it flies
And slowly, will not stay;
Alike, through clear and clouded skies,
It cleaves its silent way.

Alike the bitter cup of grief,
  Alike the draught of bliss,
Its progress leaves but moment brief
  For baffled lips to kiss.

The sparkling draught is dried away;
  The hour of rest is gone;
And urgent voices round us say,
  "Ho! lingerer, hasten on!"

And has the soul then only gained,
  From this brief time of ease,
A moment's rest, when overstrained,
  One hurried glimpse of peace?

An unseen work within was plying,
  Like honey-seeking bee;
From flower to flower, unwearied, flying,
  Laboured one faculty:

Thoughtful for winter's future sorrow,
  In gloom and scarcity;
Prescient to-day of want to-morrow,
  Toiled quiet Memory.

And when Youth's summer day is vanished,
  And Age brings winter's stress;
Her stores, with hoarded sweets replenished,
  Life's evening hours will bless.

This is not the place to speak of the poetry of Emily Brontë; she, too, scarcely recked how hardly the muses must be served ere they will take the stammer out of mortal tongues; but though the language of her verse often falters and halts, none the less does she here speak her native dialect, and utter her soul in lines to be hailed

from afar and joyfully lodged in the human memory. It is hard to believe that, amongst the few purchasers of this little volume, half-a-dozen righteous men were not to be found who would, even had Ellis Bell not otherwise become famous, have kept alive her memory in the quiet nooks and truly pleasant places of literature, by dint of frequent repetitions of such lines as the following:—

The linnet in the rocky dells,
  The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells,
  That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast,
  The wild birds raise their brood,
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
  Have left her solitude!

I ween that when the grave's dark wall
  Did first her form retain,
They thought their hearts could ne'er recall
  The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow
  Unchecked through future years;
But where is all their anguish now?
  And where are all their tears?

Well, let them fight for honour's breath,
  Or pleasure's shade pursue;
The dweller in the land of death
  Is changed and careless too.

And if their eyes should watch and weep
  Till sorrow's source were dry,
She would not in her tranquil sleep
  Return a single sigh.

Blow, west-wind, by the lonely mound,
And murmur, summer streams;
There is no need of other sound
To soothe my lady's dreams.

The gifts of Anne Brontë were those of the hymn-writer, whose object is rather to stir and set in motion well-defined pre-existing ideas of the readers than to introduce new ones. Anne Brontë's is a pathetic figure; much of her life was spent timidly, working hard amongst strangers; she never had the hard grip of either of her sisters; she was fitted only for gentle things, and ye she had, in the strongest measure, the literary cravings and aspirations of her family, and was called upon, like poor Ophelia, to take part in a tragedy. She was thus tried beyond her strength. Her two novels are failures, but her verses have a tender pathos of their own. Her last composition, having found its way into popular hymn-books, is perhaps at this moment the widest-known work of the three sisters. I refer to the lines beginning—

"I hoped that with the brave and strong."

But from amongst the poems contributed to the little volume we are speaking of might be selected several of interest. I give one—

O God! if this indeed be all
That Life can show to me;
If on my aching brow may fall
One freshening dew from Thee:

If with no brighter light than this
The lamp of hope may glow;
And I may only dream of bliss
And wake to weary woe:

If friendship's solace must decay,
When other joys are gone;
And love must keep so far away,
While I go wandering on—

Wandering and toiling without gain,
The slave of other's will;
With constant care and frequent pain,
Despised, forgotten still;

Grieving to look on vice and sin,
Yet powerless to quell
The silent current from within,
The outward torrent's swell.

While all the good I would impart,
The feelings I would share,
Are driven backward to my heart,
And turned to wormwood there.

If clouds must ever keep from sight
The glories of the sun;
And I must suffer winter's blight
Ere summer is begun.

If Life must be so full of care,
Then call me soon to Thee,
Or give me strength enough to bear
My load of misery.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË never regarded herself as a poet. It was as a novelist, or, as she would have put it, "a writer of tales," that she hoped for success. All three sisters had a story in manuscript before the publication of their poems, which latter they regarded but as a preliminary venture to see which way the wind blew. Emily Brontë had, by this time, written "Wuthering Heights"; Anne Brontë had finished "Agnes Grey"; and Charlotte "The Professor." Over these three very different stories the sisters had many discussions and talks in their old home—robbed now of joy, and hard put to it as they were for hope. "The Professor" was despatched on his dreary rounds. It was rejected by publisher after publisher, and, hateful sight! was wont to reappear at Haworth addressed to "Mr. Currer Bell, care of Miss Brontë"—defiled with another refusal. Miss Brontë was far too downright a person ever to adopt the surely not dishonest practice of the disappointed, but wily author, who is careful, before sending off the child of his brains on a fresh voyage of adventure, to obliterate all tokens of the disastrous trip from which it has but just returned. Not she, indeed! The poor "Professor"

carried with him to every new place the record of his past failures. This surely was not to obey the injunction, "Be ye wise as serpents!"

Mr. Brontë's sight had now so suffered from cataract that he was nearly blind, and an operation was suggested. Charlotte and Emily took the matter up, with their accustomed good sense and vigour. They went to Manchester; discovered an oculist; took lodgings for their father, to which, under Charlotte's care, he was removed in August, 1846. The operation was performed, and successfully. On the very morning of it "The Professor"[1] turned up, rejected once more. Then it was that Charlotte Brontë began "Jane Eyre," not in haste or anger, as if to prove to the world that it was wrong in thus snubbing a daughter of genius, but slowly and clearly, waiting for the moments of true perception, and writing always to say something. She afterwards told Mrs. Gaskell that it was not every day she could write, and that sometimes months elapsed before she felt she had anything to add to that portion of her story which was already written. She was a true artist in words—that is, careful in their selection—ruthless in their rejection, and a constant student of their effect. She thus acquired style, and her sentences, strung together as on an electric chain, quiver under us as we hurry over them in pursuit of their story. The ways of authors vary. Miss Brontë is said never to have

[1] This tale remained in manuscript the rest of Miss Brontë's life, but was published after her death in two volumes. It has an interest, particularly as showing the restricted nature of its author's invention, but as a story it is ineffective and unpleasant.

written down a sentence until she clearly understood what she wanted to say, had deliberately chosen the words and arranged them in right order. Then she wrote them down on scraps of paper held against a piece of pasteboard, close up to her short-sighted eyes. Her finished manuscript she copied from these pencilled scraps.

The first glimpse we get of the green-eyed heroine of the famous novel is when we find her creator assuring Emily and Anne Brontë that they were wrong, even morally wrong, in making their heroines beautiful as a matter of course; and, when they replied that it was impossible to make a heroine acceptable to the public on any other terms, Charlotte's answer was ready: "I will prove that you are wrong. I will show you a heroine as plain and small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours." If Miss Eyre's ugliness was a little too much emphasized, we shall now know why. It is pleasant to think that during the same period Thackeray was working away at his green-eyed heroine—the scandalous, delightful super-moral Becky. These two damsels, now lying perdue amongst their authors' papers, were destined to take the world by storm together, and to prove how willing that much-abused planet is to accept any heroine, though she be as ugly as Charles Lamb's Mrs. Conrady, with shout and song; provided only she be not, at the same time, as insipid as barley-water and as tasteless as gelatine.

Miss Brontë, in her determination to write something that should succeed, abated nothing of her household or parochial duties. She was a diligent Sunday-school

teacher, and tolerably efficient female curate, sharing the labours of those male curates whom she handled so roughly in her second novel. Though a parson's daughter, and destined to be a parson's wife, she certainly belonged to the small band of anti-clerical women. She was very unsympathetic towards curates. She cruelly writes to a friend: "I have no desire at all to see your curate." When three of them came in one day to the parsonage to have a friendly glass, or rather cup of tea, she describes them as "rushing in," and adds—"If they had behaved quietly and decently, I would have served them out their tea in peace; but they began glorifying themselves and abusing the Dissenters in such a manner that my temper lost its balance, and I pronounced a few sentences sharply and rapidly which struck them all dumb. Papa was greatly horrified also, but I don't regret it."

In 1846 the clergyman who, eight years afterwards, became her husband, was a curate at Haworth, and a report was then spread that the two were engaged to be married. Miss Brontë denied it as follows: "I need scarcely say that never was rumour more unfounded. They (the curates) regard me as an old maid; and I regard them, one and all, as highly uninteresting, narrow, and unattractive specimens of the coarser sex."[1] Is it permissible to wonder whether Rachel ever took this view of Jacob during any period of his long courtship?

In the meantime, "The Professor" was still on his travels. "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey" had

[1] Reid, 72.

found a publisher—in the sense of finding a man who said he would publish them—but no proofs had arrived.

By the middle of 1847, "Jane Eyre" was nearly finished, and, as it happened, owed her introduction to the great publishing house of Smith and Elder to the unfortunate "Professor," who, just at this time, was rejected by that firm, but in terms of kindness and consideration. "The Professor" was only in two volumes, and the publishers said that any work in three volumes by the same author would receive careful attention. To some pampered children of literary fortune such a refusal might be accounted a blow, but to Charlotte Brontë it seemed like a caress. On the 24th of August she wrote to Messrs. Smith and Elder as follows:

"I now send you per rail a MS. entitled, 'Jane Eyre,' a novel in three volumes, by Currer Bell. I find I cannot prepay the carriage of the parcel, as money for that purpose is not received at the small station-house where it is left. If, when you acknowledge the receipt of the MS., you would have the goodness to mention the amount charged on delivery, I will immediately transmit it in postage stamps. It is better in future to address, 'Mr. Currer Bell, under cover to Miss Brontë, Haworth, Bradford, Yorkshire,' as there is a risk of letters otherwise directed not reaching me at present. To save trouble, I enclose an envelope."[1]

The book was immediately accepted. It is a vulgar error, loosely circulated in conversation, that "Jane

[1] G., 245.

Eyre" went the round of the publishers, and was at last printed in despair by Messrs. Smith and Elder. That publishers are as puppies blind to real merit is an allegation I shall never be at the pains to dispute; but in a biography, however meagre, of Charlotte Brontë, the truth must be told, even though it offends those who are totally indifferent to facts, except so far as they support theories such as the one above quoted about the eyesight of publishers.

There was never any doubt at all about "Jane Eyre." Her *début* was triumphant from the very first, and surely it was time the pale horizon of Miss Brontë's life was flushed with the rosy tints of a first success.

On October 16, 1847, "Jane Eyre" was published in three volumes. An early copy was sent to Thackeray, who at once read it, and heartily acknowledged its extraordinary merit. The reviews were not remarkable at first, but "Jane Eyre" needed no puffing. It went of itself, and, in Mrs. Gaskell's words, "early in December the rush began for copies."

CHAPTER IX.

IT is now hard upon forty years since "Jane Eyre" was first published. It ought therefore to be possible to assign to her something like her proper place in the order of literary precedence, but "this Editor" declines so delicate a task. It is easy to understand the great interest and excitement such a tale at once created. Most books are born dead, and it is always a startling moment when you first discover that you are holding an exception in your hands. "Jane Eyre" was a live coal dropped by some unknown hand—from some unknown quarter—amongst the literary coteries and "log-rollers." There was no mistake about it, here was a book at first hand. "Reality, deep, significant, reality, is its characteristic" wrote Mr. Lewes in *Fraser*. It is a book, cried a critic in *The Atlas*, "to make the pulses gallop and the heart beat." And so it was. The activity of a book of this description is at first always somewhat abnormal and ill-regulated. In a world of torpidities any rapid-moving thing is hailed somewhat extravagantly. Jane Eyre graces and Rochester rudenesses had an undesirable vogue, even as Byronisms and Wertherisms and other extinct nonsense had before them. This boisterous sort

of life is not of long endurance. Mr. Rochester has long ceased to "thrill the girls" who, though they yet love a rake and like him middle-aged, require him to be dished up somewhat differently from Jane Eyre's "master." Jane herself has joined the pale ranks of discrowned heroines. We can now regard her very dispassionately indeed, even as she did herself when she painted her own picture, and wrote under it "Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor and plain." But the memories of a time when it was different with us, when, with *The Atlas* critic, the pulses galloped and the heart beat, greatly interfere with the exercise of a critical judgment upon this magnificent book. A certain forlornness, a desertedness now seems distilled from its pages. Can it be that "Jane Eyre" is growing old? There is of course an alternative possibility.

How anybody can have been in doubt as to the sex of Currer Bell seems surprising to us who know. If ever there was a woman's woman it was Jane Eyre, and as for Fairfax Rochester—man though he be in every bone of his body—he is yet man described by woman. However, the very intelligent critic who wrote for *The Examiner* felt no doubt that Currer Bell was a man. The detestable hypocrite who wrote the review in *The Quarterly*, to which further reference will have to be made, was too clever or too well-informed for this error of judgment, for although the base creature, quoting with an odious vulgarity the lady whom he said he always consulted on such matters, asserts that it is almost impossible to believe that any woman, writing of another woman, called up hurriedly in the night, as Jane Eyre

was when her master was set on fire, would have described her as putting on her "frock" instead of her dressing-gown, he only does so to give point, if point there be, to his libel, that if Currer Bell should turn out to be a woman she must be one of those who had forfeited all claim to the society of the respectable of her own sex. From which elaborate sneer, it would seem to have been the opinion of this critic that feminine substitutes for the diurnal frock were peculiarly the undress garb of the wives of *Quarterly* reviewers and that stamp of person, whereas, in reality, as one may safely assert without quoting any authority whatever, they are articles of general use.

Mr. Rochester occasionally said very good things, and he never gave his "paid subordinate" better advice than when he said to her, "Keep to yourself, and don't venture on generalities of which you are intensely ignorant." So long as Jane Eyre keeps to herself and describes the passion of her own heart, she is great, inimitable, unsurpassable. When she goes out of herself and ventures on such generalities as "Baroness Ingram of Ingram Park" and her big daughter, the queenly Blanche, who, speaking to Sam the footman, says "Cease that chatter, Blockhead, and do my bidding," she no doubt exhibits a far-reaching ignorance. But still Genius like Charity should begin at home, and it is something to know the secrets of the human heart. Who so well as Charlotte Brontë has described the exquisite fitness and reciprocity of love? When Rochester and Jane are talking together, however much you may demur to the tone of their conversation or object to the subjects they talk about—you

nevertheless feel throughout how keenly they are enjoying it, how every word is telling upon the sensitiveness of the heart to which it is addressed, and how all that they say and all that they do in each other's presence, is bringing them nearer one to the other, and thus involving the catastrophe of the story, which is not so much told as made to happen under your eyes. To compel the reader thus to share the emotions of the two characters and to be bandied backwards and forwards from Jane to Rochester, from Rochester to Jane is very high art indeed, and entitles the novel to imposing rank amongst the love stories of our language.

The subject of love stories is one about which even good people (and for those alone I write) differ most lamentably. That admirable critic, Mr. Leslie Stephen, considers "Henrietta Temple" a good love story, and yet there are many who think that if "Henrietta Temple" be a good love story, the sooner truth and genuine feeling are left out of the comedy of life the better; since they can discover no trace of either in Mr. Disraeli's worst novel. This difference between Mr. Stephen and some deserving persons is only mentioned to show how difficult the subject is, and how impossible it is to hope for any general *consensus* of opinion on a theme into which everybody insists upon importing his own trumpery experience.

That there is a great deal of Charlotte Brontë in Jane Eyre is certain. There is the same restless, imaginative, responsive, passionate nature imprisoned under a plain and non-attractive exterior and put to hard service amongst meagre surroundings. There is the same

ruthless handling of illusions, the almost savage stock-taking of merits and accomplishments. Miss Brontë was fond of putting on the black cap and sentencing herself to extermination. So was Jane.

"I pronounced judgment to this effect—That a greater fool than Jane Eyre never breathed the breath of life, that a more fantastic idiot had never surfeited on sweet lies and swallowed poison as if it were nectar."

And again:

"Poor stupid dupe! Could not self-interest make you wiser? You repeated to yourself this morning the brief scene of last night? Cover your face and be ashamed! He said something in praise of your eyes did he? Blind puppy! Open these bleared eye-lids and look on your own accursed senselessness."

This is a little too bad. Without going the length of the fine gentleman who never named his own name without raising his hat, there is surely an obligation to be decently polite even to yourself.

So too in Jane's way of talk there is much that resembles Charlotte Brontë's own experiences. A certain fierceness underlying a restrained and even occasionally prim surface-manner. In fact, one feels all through the book that whatever Jane did, Charlotte would, or at least could, have done.

Rochester was describing her as well as Adêle's governess when he said—

"Precisely: I see you do. I see genuine contentment in your gait and mien, your eye and face, when

you are helping me and pleasing me—working for me, and with me, in, as you characteristically say, '*all that is right*:' for if I bid you do what you thought wrong, there would be no light-footed running, no neat-handed alacrity, no lively glance and animated complexion. My friend would then turn to me, quiet and pale, and would say, 'No, sir; that is impossible: I cannot do it, because it is wrong;' and would become immutable as a fixed star. Well, you too have power over me, and may injure me; yet I dare not show you where I am vulnerable, lest, faithful and friendly as you are, you should transfix me at once."

The crowning merit of "Jane Eyre" is its energy—a delightful quality at any time, but perhaps especially so just now. Some of our novelists make their characters walk through their parts after the languid fashions lately prevailing in the ball-room, and this proving irritating to some others of robuster frame of mind, has caused these latter, out of sheer temper, to make their heroines skip about like so many Kitty Clovers on the village green. But Jane Eyre neither languishes in drawing-rooms nor sits dangling her ankles upon gates, but is always interesting, eloquent, vehement.

"'I grieve to leave Thornfield: I love Thornfield:—I love it because I have lived in it a full and delightful life,—momentarily at least. I have not been trampled on. I have not been petrified. I have not been buried with inferior minds, and excluded from every glimpse of communion with what is bright and energetic and high. I have talked, face to face, with what I reverence; with

what I delight in,—with an original, a vigorous, an expanded mind. I have known you, Mr. Rochester; and it strikes me with terror and anguish to feel I absolutely must be torn from you for ever. I see the necessity of departure; and it is like looking on the necessity of death.'

"'Where do you see the necessity?' he asked, suddenly.

"'Where? You, sir, have placed it before me.'

"'In what shape?'

"'In the shape of Miss Ingram; a noble and beautiful woman,—your bride.'

"'My bride! What bride? I have no bride!'

"'But you will have.'

"'Yes;—I will!—I will!' He set his teeth.

"'Then I must go:—you have said it yourself.'

"'No: you must stay! I swear it—and the oath shall be kept.'

"'I tell you I must go!' I retorted, roused to something like passion. 'Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton?—a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you,—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty, and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, or even of mortal flesh:—it is my spirit that addresses your

spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal,—as we are!'

"'As we are!' repeated Mr. Rochester."

The dramatized version of "Jane Eyre" did not, I believe, find much public favour, but those who remember the late Mr. Kelly in the part of Rochester will probably agree in thinking that it was a manly part played after a manly fashion by a most manly actor.

Characters in novels are *ferœ naturæ*, that is, anybody may always criticize them, and indeed everybody who reads about them cannot help criticizing them, whether he will or not. We like or we dislike, and we owe it to ourselves to have the courage of our opinions, and should never be afraid of making them known. For Rochester the lover I have an inordinate admiration. Rochester the man I am ready to hand over to the tormentors.

The crudities of the book, both of plot and manner, will not surprise those who have been great readers of novels. It is astonishing how such things cling to and mar the work of men and women who have not the excuses Miss Brontë had. There was Mr. G. H. Lewes, who took upon himself, in a kindly spirit, to lecture Miss Brontë on her art, and received from her a reply, which he considered "cavalier," and who is always, whatever may be thought of his literary merits, reckoned to have been an airy and accomplished worldling. What does he do but write a novel in three volumes, called "Rose, Blanche, and Violet," and introduce into it a character whose sin of blasphemy might have been forgiven him, had not his favourite expletive, iterated and reiterated,

not once nor twice, but dozens of times up and down the unhappy pages of all three volumes been, "Damn my whiskers!" Is it possible to imagine an oath more agonizingly vulgar, or more mirthlessly absurd?

Miss Brontë's errors lie on the surface, and can be easily removed. Half-a-dozen deletions and as many wisely-tempered alterations, and the work of correction would be done in any one of her novels. I am far from saying they would then be faultless, but at least they would be free from those faults which make the fortunes of small critics and jokes for the evening papers.

A novel like "Jane Eyre," fresh from the hands of its creator—unmistakably alive—speaking a bold, unconventional language, recognizing love even in a woman's heart as something which does not always wait to be asked before springing into being, was sure to disturb those who worship the goddess Propriety. Prim women, living hardly on the interest of "a little hoard of maxims," men judiciously anxious to confine their own female folk to a diet of literary lentils, read "Jane Eyre" with undisguised alarm. There was an outrageous frankness about the book—a brushing away of phrases and formulas calculated to horrify those who, to do them justice, generally recognize an enemy when they see him. "Jane Eyre" created a most decided draught in certain stuffy quarters, and the fiat went forth that it must be crushed in the dread columns of *The Quarterly Review*. Who wrote the article in the December number for 1849 of that periodical is not publicly known, but the article itself is worthy of a little attention. The early part of it is devoted to a review of *Vanity Fair* of

a laudatory character, Becky Sharp receiving her due meed of praise, being hailed as a charming creature, quite outside the invitation of the gospel or the lash of the law. Mr. Thackeray's efforts thus rewarded, the pious writer disentangles himself from the arms of Becky, and approaches Jane. His tone alters. He becomes as different from his former self as is a magistrate on the bench from his worship after dinner. He is not, however, without discrimination. He at once pronounces the book remarkable, nor as it proceeds is he impervious to its tragic power—nay, he actually recognizes its moral sublimity, and grows almost enthusiastic over the triumphant outcome of the struggle in Jane's soul when Rochester, whom she loves to the finest fibre of her nature, betrays not her love, but her trust. He knew well enough that hardly anywhere in English fiction has the dignity of womanhood been more nobly vindicated, upheld, and established, than in the book that lay before him; yet mindful of his bargain, true to his guineas, he sought by circulating what he himself calls "the gossip of Mayfair," to destroy the reputation and fair fame of the author. The most striking feature of this tale-bearer and scandal-monger is his pleasing piety. Let us listen to him for awhile—

"We have said that this was a picture of a natural heart. This, to our view, is the great and crying mischief of the book. Jane Eyre is throughout the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit—the more dangerous to exhibit from that prestige of principle and self-control which is liable to dazzle the eye

too much for it to observe the insufficient and unsound foundation on which it rests. It is true Jane does right, and exerts great moral strength, but it is the strength of a mere heathen mind, which is a law unto itself. No Christian grace is perceptible upon her. She has inherited in fullest measure the worst sin of our fallen nature, the sin of pride. Jane Eyre is proud, and therefore she is ungrateful too. It pleased God to make her an orphan, friendless and penniless, and yet she thanks nobody, least of all the friends, companions, and instructors of her helpless youth, for the food and raiment, the care and education vouchsafed to her till she was capable in mind and fit to provide for herself. Altogether the autobiography of Jane Eyre is pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition. There is throughout it a murmuring against the comforts of the rich and the privations of the poor, which, so far as each individual is concerned, is a murmuring against God's appointment. There is a proud and perpetual asserting of the rights of man for which we find no authority in God's Word or in His providence. There is that pervading tone of ungodly discontent which is at once the most prominent and the most subtle evil which the law and the pulpit, which all civilized society has, in fact, at the present day to contend with. We do not hesitate to say that the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code—human and divine—abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home, is the same which has written 'Jane Eyre.'"

After reading this portentous diatribe, it is no longer

difficult to believe in the "black marble clergyman" in "Jane Eyre." Indeed of the two, Mr. Brocklehurst and the reviewer, the former is the more respectable. Hear him—

"'Ladies,' said he, turning to his family; 'Miss Temple, teachers, and children, you all see this girl?'

"Of course they did; for I felt their eyes directed like burning-glasses against my scorched skin.

"'You see she is yet young; you observe she possesses the ordinary form of childhood; God has graciously given her the shape that he has given to all of us; no signal deformity points her out as a marked character. Who would think that the Evil One had already found a servant and agent in her? Yet such, I grieve to say, is the case.'

"A pause—in which I began to steady the palsy of my nerves, and to feel that the Rubicon was passed; and that the trial, no longer to be shirked, must be firmly sustained.

"'My dear children,' pursued the black marble clergyman, with pathos, 'this is a sad, a melancholy occasion; for it becomes my duty to warn you, that this girl, who might be one of God's own lambs, is a little castaway: not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien. You must be on your guard against her; you must shun her example: if necessary, avoid her company, exclude her from your sports, and shut her out from your converse. Teachers, you must watch her: keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well

her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul: if, indeed, such salvation be possible, for (my tongue falters while I tell it) this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut—this girl is—a liar!'

"Now came a pause of ten minutes; during which I, by this time in perfect possession of my wits, observed all the female Brocklehursts produce their pocket-handkerchiefs and apply them to their optics, while the elderly lady swayed herself to and fro, and the two younger ones whispered, 'How shocking!'

"Mr. Brocklehurst resumed.

"'This I learned from her benefactress; from the pious and charitable lady who adopted her in her orphan state, reared her as her own daughter, and whose kindness, whose generosity the unhappy girl repaid by an ingratitude so bad, so dreadful, that at last her excellent patroness was obliged to separate her from her own young ones, fearful lest her vicious example should contaminate their purity; she has sent her here to be healed, even as the Jews of old sent their diseased to the troubled Pool of Bethesda; and teachers, superintendent, I beg of you not to allow the waters to stagnate round her.'"

If it be said that such nauseous and malignant hypocrisy as that of *The Quarterly* reviewer ought not to be republished, the answer is that it is impossible to rejoice with due fervour over exterminated monsters until we have gazed in museums upon their direful features. It is a matter of congratulation that such a

review as the one we have quoted from is now impossible. It is also convenient that the name of the reviewer is unknown, so that no one can arise and say, "I loved that man."

It was judgments like those of this reviewer that tempted people to foreswear respectability altogether—to break up house and live in the tents of Bohemia—since remaining respectable and keeping house exposed them to the risk of meeting, actually meeting, the reviewer himself and other members of his family.

Miss Brontë was far too heroic a soul to be troubled by any such temptations. Her character was in no man's keeping. Sorely wounded as she was by male ruffianism and female ineptitude, she but withdrew within herself, confident of her own purity and rectitude. She was accustomed to judge herself with an almost terrible severity. Could she but satisfy herself, she was satisfied. To outrage decency, to disregard the rules of becoming behaviour, would have shocked Miss Brontë far more than ever it would her hypocritical reviewer, for whose morality I should have been sorry to have gone bail. When some one had once bad taste enough and ignorance enough to come up to Miss Brontë and say lightly, "You know we have both of us written naughty books," she sustained a shock from which she was long recovering. The judgments of the world in this matter are capricious and to be disregarded. Charlotte Brontë had strength enough of mind to do so. She could exclaim—

> "'Tis not the babbling of an idle world,
> Where praise and censure are at random hurled,

That can the meanest of my thoughts control,
Or shake one settled purpose of my soul.
Free and at large might their wild curses roam,
If all, if all alas ! were well at home." [1]

Certainly self-control is the most majestic of the virtues.

[1] Churchill, "The Conference," 221-6.

CHAPTER X.

THE law of anonymity the sisters had laid down for themselves was scrupulously observed by Currer Bell, who was thus debarred from all outward and visible signs of her great success. She told her father, from whom she had but few secrets, that she had not only written a book —any Brontë could do that—but printed one, which had attained the honour of a flattering review. So saying, she gave Mr. Brontë a copy of "Jane Eyre" and left him alone to his reading and reflections. At tea time he observed, "Girls, do you know Charlotte has written a book, and it is much better than likely." But outside the family nobody was let into the secret. This policy, adopted in pursuance of mutual promises given by the sisters one to the other, was probably not a wise one. Charlotte Brontë, though a shy woman, was not by any means a shy author. Her courage was dauntless, and she had none of that diseased vanity which causes some writers to abstain from reading hostile criticisms and to live wrapped up in their own conceit of themselves, a garment objectionable indeed, but not on the score of scantiness. Miss Brontë would have been all the better for publicity, and for intercourse with the world in

Whitworth College
Spokane, Wn.

which she was ever interested. Such intercourse with it as she subsequently had did her nothing but good, for she was one of those rare spirits who can enjoy the world and condemn it at the same time, which is the true eclecticism. But her enjoyment, it must be admitted, was of a moderate and subdued character. However this may be, she remained shut up at Haworth, whilst everybody was wondering whether Currer Bell was man or woman, who and what.

Her sisters' venture was published by Mr. Newby in December, 1847, at the time when the second edition of "Jane Eyre" was passing through the press. Never were two tales more unequally yoked together than "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey." The latter story is conceived and written in the pious plaintive vein proper to Anne Brontë and the columns of a religious newspaper; but none the less its pages introduce us to a young lady who swears nearly as lustily as Hareton Earnshaw in the other tale. This mixture of the manners of a nursery governess, and the language of a groom must have proved puzzling to the reader. Of "Wuthering Heights" this is not the place to speak. Well might Douglas Jerrold assure the reading public they had never read anything like it before, and despite its imitators, we may safely add—or since. The extraordinary charm of the book lies in its desperate sincerity. Emily Brontë seems never to have entertained the least doubt about her characters, horrible and unnatural though they are; and the book is consequently free of the slightest taint of affectation or straining after effect. "Wuthering Heights" is certainly a book one is tempted to over-

praise; but as this has been frequently done of late by writers of considerable reputation, it is unnecessary to follow in their steps.

But only one of the three sisters was destined to know success. "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey" found no acceptance. *The Quarterly* reviewer already referred to spoke of Heathcliff and Catherine—not without a hideous insight, though all a-squint—as being Rochester and Jane in a purely animal state, and then proceeded to observe in his pleasant fashion, that it was quite unnecessary to warn his readers against a book never likely to find its way into a decent household. Now-a-days such a testimony proceeding from such a quarter would make the fortune of any book, but it was different in 1848.

The public, muddle-headed at the best of times, and always pathetically anxious to be set right about trifles, grew puzzled over Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, and showed some disposition to believe that there were not three Bells, but only one, and that "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey" were earlier works of the author of "Jane Eyre."

This view did not meet with favour at Haworth Parsonage. No one of the three liked it. Charles Lamb did not like having Capel Lofft's letters, signed C.L., attributed to him; and I have no doubt Capel Lofft would have disowned the essay on "Roast Pig" with alacrity, and possibly warmth. When the sisters heard that business complications were actually arising in consequence of this confusion of identities, they determined to prove their separate individualities by ocular

demonstration, and accordingly Currer and Acton put themselves, one Friday night in July, 1848, into the London train, and Saturday morning found them breakfasting in the Chapter Coffee House, Paternoster Row, well known to Charlotte Brontë and all readers of "Villette," but now seen for the first time by Anne, who had never before been in London.

After breakfast and what they called "a tidy," they set off on foot to Cornhill to prove their existence.

Charlotte had with her Messrs. Smith and Elder's last letter addressed, "Mr. Currer Bell, care of Miss Brontë, Haworth." Mr. Smith received them, and bore the communication that Currer Bell was a woman, and a little one, with a publisher's equanimity, and besought the sisters to stop in London for awhile and be lionized. Charlotte Brontë had no desire to be looked at, but she would gladly have met two or three of her favourite authors. She stuck, however, to her bargain with her sisters, and during the few days Anne and she were in London they were known as the Miss Browns. They were introduced to the Smith family, went to the opera, to church, to the Royal Academy, and the National Gallery, and on the following Tuesday, laden with books —tired and jaded—they returned home.

At the parsonage things wore the same gloomy, distressful aspect. Branwell was there, sleeping most of the day, wakeful and troublesome at night. Anne's health was so feeble as to mark her out for an early death. Emily's cough became a cause of great anxiety and dread, but, says her sister, "It is useless to question

her, you get no answers. It is still more useless to recommend remedies, they are never adopted."

On Sunday morning, September 14, 1848, Branwell died, standing, so it is said, to show his strength of will. He had been in the village two days before his death, so his end was sudden. His mind, wrote his eldest sister, "had undergone the peculiar change which frequently precedes death, the calm of better feelings filled it, a return of natural affection marked his last moments."

Branwell's death could be nothing but a relief to the home his habits had disgraced. Once dead it was possible to remember what he had been, to think of what he might have been, and to allow the affections to cluster round the memories of a generous boyhood.

Success had at last crowned the faithful efforts of at least one of the sisters. There was no need now to worry about the future, to drive up to a strange house and be introduced to half-a-dozen of other people's children as the "new governess." No! The hobgoblins of poverty and dependence were at last driven from the door. The golden gates had swung open.

But the Brontës were too full of sad experience and bitter forebodings to forget that there is a part cast for death in every play. They dreamt of no Indian summer at Haworth. Immediately after her brother's death Emily became very ill. Her sister's description is still heart rending—

"My sister Emily first declined. The details of her illness are deep-branded in my memory, but to dwell on them, either in thought or narrative, is not in my power.

Never in all her life had she lingered over any task that lay before her, and she did not linger now. She sank rapidly. She made haste to leave us. Yet, while physically she perished, mentally she grew stronger than we had yet known her. Day by day, when I saw with what a front she met suffering, I looked on her with an anguish of wonder and love. I have seen nothing like it; but, indeed, I have never seen her parallel in anything. Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone. The awful point was, that while full of ruth for others, on herself she had no pity; the spirit was inexorable to the flesh; from the trembling hand, the unnerved limbs, the faded eyes, the same service was exacted as they had rendered in health. To stand by and witness this, and not dare to remonstrate, was a pain no words can render.

"Two cruel months of hope and fear passed painfully by, and the day came at last when the terrors and pains of death were to be undergone by this treasure, which had grown dearer and dearer to our hearts as it wasted before our eyes. Towards the decline of that day, we had nothing of Emily but her mortal remains as consumption left them. She died December 19, 1848."[1]

Nor was it possible for either the father or elder daughter to disguise from themselves the fact that Anne Brontë must soon follow her favourite sister. Her fate indeed had been the earlier sealed of the two. Anne's illness lasted longer, and was borne with greater consideration for the feelings of others than marked her

[1] Preface to new edition of "Wuthering Heights."

sister's, but with equal fortitude and brighter hope. She died at Scarborough on May 28, 1849.

We have now nearly worked our way through the tablet on the right-hand side of the communion-table. Old Mr. Brontë and his daughter Charlotte were left alone.

CHAPTER XI.

"JANE EYRE" was no sooner published in October, 1847, than "Shirley" was begun. The events upon which the story turns had long been in her mind, and the stirring tales Miss Wooler had told her in the old Roehead days seemed to crave release from her memory. So with an ancient file of Leeds *Mercuries* before her, and her reputation as the author of "Jane Eyre" something "between a hindrance and a help" behind her, she began to write her second novel.

A highly imaginative, and yet earnest and practical, person like Charlotte Brontë must find novel-writing and life-living an odd pair to drive side by side. Before she had finished the first volume of "Shirley" Branwell was dead. Before she had finished the third, Emily and Anne were dead. But she worked on, and "Shirley" was published in October, 1849, just two years after "Jane Eyre."

She had taken great pains with it, but was far from satisfied with the result. "My expectations," she writes, "are very low and my anticipations somewhat sad and bitter."

"Shirley" has, and deserves to have, many friends, and contains passages of great daring and beauty; but,

as a whole, it must be pronounced (by me) inferior alike to its predecessor and its successor. It lacks the splendid unity of "Jane Eyre," the uniqueness of "Villette." It is a series of portraits and exteriors—all good, some superb; but to pursue the metaphor, one walks through the book as through a picture gallery, always ready to go on, but never averse to turn back, since continuity of impression is of necessity impossible.

But it would be very foolish to turn back all the same, for though the story as a story is not interesting, and the male creatures very Brontesque indeed, the book is full of scenery, atmosphere, and "Jane Eyre" philosophy of the usually bracing type. There is a roughness about the tone of the writing which repelled a good many decent people, Charles Kingsley amongst the number, though whether it was the man or the clergyman in him that "Shirley" offended is doubtful. The curates are certainly somewhat savagely depicted. A little kindness is never a dangerous thing. If it be true of the originals of Mr. Donne, Mr. Sweeting, and Mr. Malone, that, recognizing their own portraits, they were accustomed, during the remainder at all events of their unbeneficed days, to call each other playfully by the names their too critical neighbour had bestowed upon them, they cannot have been very far from the kingdom of heaven. But Miss Brontë was a ruthless being never afraid to strike, or unwilling to wound, what she disliked. I confess I have no admiration for the following passage which occurs in one of her letters:

"The very curates, poor fellows, show no resentment:

each characteristically finds solace for his own wounds in crowing over his brethren. Mr. Donne was, at first, a little disturbed; for a week or two he was in disquietude, but he is now soothed down; only yesterday I had the pleasure of making him a comfortable cup of tea, and seeing him sip it with revived complacency. It is a curious fact that, since he read 'Shirley,' he has come to the house oftener than ever, and been remarkably meek and assiduous to please. Some people's natures are veritable enigmas: I quite expected to have had one good scene at least with him; but as yet nothing of the sort has occurred." [1]

If ever there was a book, which takes its readers out into the "fresh blowing airs" and treats them to what the Duchess of Malfi, calls the "wild benefit of nature," it is "Shirley." Its author's taste lies no doubt in the direction of storm, wind, and rain. Her glass seems generally to stand low. Such a steady "set fair" description of English scenery, as that with which George Eliot opens "Felix Holt," a magnificent opening, is not to be looked for from Charlotte Brontë, whose eye was quick for the gathering storm-cloud, and whose ear delighted to catch the distant moaning of the new-born gale.

"The evening was pitch-dark: star and moon were quenched in gray rain-clouds—gray they would have been by day, by night they looked sable. Malone was not a man given to close observation of Nature; her changes passed, for the most part, unnoticed by him; he

[1] G., 328.

could walk miles on the most varying April day, and never see the beautiful dallying of earth and heaven; never mark when a sunbeam kissed the hill-tops, making them smile clear in green light, or when a shower wept over them, hiding their crests with the low-hanging, dishevelled tresses of a cloud. He did not, therefore, care to contrast the sky as it now appeared—a muffled, steaming vault, all black, save where, towards the east, the furnaces of Stilbro' iron-works threw a tremulous lurid shimmer on the horizon—with the same sky on an unclouded frosty night. He did not trouble himself to ask where the constellations and the planets were gone, or to regret the 'black-blue' serenity of the air-ocean which those white islets stud; and which another ocean, of heavier and denser element, now rolled below and concealed. He just doggedly pursued his way, leaning a little forward as he walked, and wearing his hat on the back of his head, as his Irish manner was. 'Tramp, tramp,' he went along the causeway, where the road boasted the privilege of such an accommodation; 'splash, splash,' through the mire-filled cart-ruts, where the flags were exchanged for soft mud. He looked but for certain land-marks; the spire of Briarfield church; further on, the lights of Redhouse."

And here's the rain:

"'I know how the heath would look on such a day,' said Caroline; 'purple-black: a deeper shade of the sky-tint, and that would be livid.'

"'Yes—quite livid, with brassy edges to the clouds,

and here and there a white gleam, more ghastly than the lurid tinge, which, as you looked at it, you momentarily expected would kindle into blinding lightning.'

"'Did it thunder?'

"'It muttered distant peals, but the storm did not break till evening, after we had reached our inn; that inn being an isolated house at the foot of a range of mountains.'

"'Did you watch the clouds come down over the mountains?'

"'I did: I stood at the window an hour watching them. The hills seemed rolled in a sullen mist, and when the rain fell in whitening sheets, suddenly they were blotted from the prospect: they were washed from the world.'"

The next passage is as eloquent as "Modern Painters" and as real as "Robinson Crusoe":

"'I shall like to go, Shirley,' again said Miss Helstone. 'I long to hear the sound of waves—ocean-waves, and to see them as I have imagined them in dreams, like tossing banks of green light, strewed with vanishing and re-appearing wreaths of foam, whiter than lilies. I shall delight to pass the shores of those lone rock-islets where the sea-birds live and breed unmolested. We shall be on the track of the old Scandinavians—of the Norseman: we shall almost see the shores of Norway. This is a very vague delight that I feel, communicated by your proposal, but it *is* a delight.'

"'Will you think of Fitful Head now, when you lie

awake at night; of gulls shrieking round it, and waves tumbling in upon it, rather than of the graves under the Rectory back-kitchen?'

"'I will try; and instead of musing about remnants of shrouds, and fragments of coffins, and human bones and mould, I will fancy seals lying in the sunshine on solitary shores, where neither fisherman nor hunter ever come; of rock crevices full of pearly eggs bedded in sea-weed; of unscared birds covering white sands in happy flocks."

The "Jane Eyre" philosophy of life finds vehement expression in "Shirley." Here is an excerpt:

"A lover masculine so disappointed can speak and urge explanation; a lover feminine can say nothing; if she did, the result would be shame and anguish, inward remorse for self-treachery. Nature would brand such demonstration as a rebellion against her instincts, and would vindictively repay it afterwards by the thunderbolt of self-contempt smiting suddenly in secret. Take the matter as you find it: ask no questions; utter no remonstrances: it is your best wisdom. You expected bread, and you have got a stone; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyrized; do not doubt that your mental stomach—if you have such a thing—is strong as an ostrich's—the stone will digest. You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation; close your fingers firmly upon the gift; let it sting through your palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed

scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test—some, it is said, die under it—you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive. This you are not aware of, perhaps, at the time, and so cannot borrow courage of that hope. Nature, however, as has been intimated, is an excellent friend in such cases; sealing the lips, interdicting utterance, commanding a placid dissimulation: a dissimulation often wearing an easy and gay mien at first, settling down to sorrow and paleness in time, then passing away, and leaving a convenient stoicism, not the less fortifying because it is half-bitter.

"Half-bitter! Is that wrong? No—it should be bitter: bitterness is strength—it is a tonic. Sweet mild force following acute suffering, you find nowhere; to talk of it is delusion. There may be apathetic exhaustion after the rack; if energy remains, it will be rather a dangerous energy—deadly when confronted with injustice."

We are indebted to *The Quarterly* reviewer for the passion lying beneath the following passage:

"The daughters were an example to their sex. They were tall, with a Roman nose a-piece. They had been educated faultlessly. All they did was well done. History and the most solid books had cultivated their minds. Principles and opinions they possessed which could not be mended. More exactly-regulated lives, feelings, manners, habits, it would have been difficult to find anywhere. They knew by heart a certain young-

ladies'-schoolroom code of laws on language, demeanour, &c.; themselves never deviated from its curious little pragmatical provisions; and they regarded with secret, whispered horror, all deviations in others. The Abomination of Desolation was no mystery to them: they had discovered that unutterable Thing in the characteristic others called Originality. Quick were they to recognize the signs of this evil; and wherever they saw its trace—whether in look, word, or deed; whether they read it in the fresh, vigorous style of a book, or listened to it in interesting, unhackneyed, pure, expressive language—they shuddered—they recoiled: danger was above their heads—peril about their steps. What was this strange thing? Being unintelligible, it must be bad. Let it be denounced and chained up."

The splendid rhetorical repudiation of Milton's "Eve" as not being the true mother of mankind, also the passage about the mermaid, are too well known to justify quotation. There are, I know, people who object to quotations altogether, but it is hard to hold with those people. Many books, as many sermons, would have been wholly unendurable to us but for the quoted matter.

In "Shirley" Charlotte Brontë hit upon the splendid device which—and I have often wondered why—has never become general, of putting the exact language of her hostile reviewer into the mouth of an odious character: "I fear, Miss Grey, you have inherited the worst sin of our fallen nature, the sin of pride;" and there are other examples of this pleasing method which may be safely recommended to smarting authors.

But Miss Brontë was still to be maltreated by the reviewers. *The Times* was acrimonious, and made her cry; but its review was not without discrimination, and she had no sort of objection to offer to criticism which approached her work with a sense of what treatment was due to a highly-laboured book. But what *The Quarterly Review* had been to "Jane Eyre" that *The Edinburgh Review* was to "Shirley"—only worse, for of the article in the former it was easy to say "some enemy hath done this," but the review in the latter was written by Mr. Lewes. This critic was by way of being Charlotte Brontë's friend, and was certainly her correspondent. He knew her secret; knew that she was an unmarried woman; knew that she was sensitive on the score of her sex, and especially anxious that her novels should be treated quite apart from it, and entirely on their artistic merits; and yet, knowing all this, Mr. Lewes founded his entire article upon Currer Bell's feminity. No doubt the temptation was great, for if there was one subject the reviewer flattered himself he understood, it was Woman in both her branches, Lovely Woman and Intellectual Woman. On this theme he discourses to his own almost infinite content with a bluntness that under the circumstances was within measurable distance of brutality, and a wit which, meaning to be pleasant, is decidedly disagreeable.

"The grand function of woman," he reminds Miss Brontë, "is and must be maternity. And this we regard not only as her distinctive characteristic and most enduring charm, but a high and holy office." A little further on he is to be found clumsily joking at some of

the incidents of this "high and holy office;" and then, to crown his offences, he suddenly apostrophizes Currer Bell in a passage which has, at all events, the power of making the reader blush, for the writer six-and-thirty years after the deed was done. There is small wonder Charlotte Brontë was angry. The wonder is she ever forgave him, except as Rowena forgave De Bracy, as a Christian, which, as Wamba explained, is no forgiveness at all. His strange resemblance in feature to her sister Emily was perhaps the real reason why she felt it hard to be at enmity with him.

CHAPTER XII.

"SHIRLEY" told the secret of the authorship of "Jane Eyre." The district was too faithfully described to escape local recognition. Places and persons were there to the life, and it is would have been curious if the Yorkshire people, of whose quick wits we hear perhaps quite enough, had not been able to lay hands upon the author. As it was, the Haworth man who first named Miss Brontë had lived for many years in Liverpool, and it was in a Liverpool newspaper that Charlotte Brontë was first proclaimed *orbi et urbi* the author of "Jane Eyre" and "Shirley." The truth once told it was impossible to deny it. Nor was there any sort of reason for withholding it any longer. It was a pity it was not told from the beginning. Had Charlotte Brontë's name been on the title-pages of "Jane Eyre" and "Shirley," her sex would not have been insulted by *The Quarterly* or outraged by *The Edinburgh* reviewer. The former could hardly have told the daughter of a beneficed clergyman that she was a heathen living amongst heathens, and plainly no better than she should be, nor could the latter very well have indulged in his disquisition on maternity and medical-student-like jests.

In November, 1849, Miss Brontë paid her first visit to London in her own proper person as a woman of distinction and literary fame. She stayed with friends whose names are still hid in dashes. They were most kind and attentive, and if from the little she says of them we seem to be strangely reminded of characters in her yet unwritten novel, that cannot be helped. The letter which Mr. Reid prints on page 101 of his book should be read by the curious in these matters.

Miss Brontë, we need not say, did not plunge headlong into society. She was far too nervous for any such a proceeding. Strange people were always strange people to her. Like her own "Caroline Helstone," she would enter a room supposed to contain strangers "wringing her hands." She had carefully to select her leonine diet. She declined Charles Dickens (which was a pity), Lady Morgan, Mesdames Trollope, Gore, and some others; but she saw the man she most wanted to see, Thackeray, and was evidently greatly struck. His quiet, simple demeanour especially surprised her, and, it may well be believed, helped to modify some of her notions concerning males. Macready she saw twice—once in "Macbeth" and once in "Othello." She did not like him at all, nor is this surprising; but that, not liking him, she should say so, in her quiet, positive way, seems to have created some consternation. Her literary criticisms on contemporary writers are not of any particular value. She was never intended to be a critic, and except an inveterate habit of telling the truth, had none of a critic's finer qualifications. It was at this time she made Miss Martineau's acquaintance, which was to be a mixed

source of pleasure and pain. In December she returned home, and found perhaps as much pleasure in telling her father what she had seen and heard as she had done in seeing and hearing it. The old man was of an objective turn, and liked real things better than authors. The

> "Upright beams innumerable
> Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
> Various, with boastful argument portrayed,"

were what he loved, and his daughter, mindful of his taste, had taken pains to visit places where such glittering things are stored, so that she might be able to tell him about them on her return.

In the June of the following year, 1850, Miss Brontë again went up to London for a fortnight during the season, carefully bargaining beforehand that she was not to be made too much of. This time she saw the Duke of Wellington at the Chapel Royal, and visited the House of Commons, and had a long call of two hours from Mr. Thackeray. Miss Brontë, who, like all shy persons, had dauntless courage, was moved to give the giant a bit of her mind. She spoke to him of his literary shortcomings, and, one by one, brought out his faults, laid them before him, and besought an explanation. What queer ideas floated through the great man's brain as he sat before his odd little judge we cannot so much as guess. All that we are told is that he defended himself like a great Turk and heathen, and that his excuses were worse than his crimes. The speeches concluded, judgment, or at any rate sentence, was deferred, and in the meantime the

criminal invited his judge to dine with him that same evening, which she did.

The visit to London over, Miss Brontë was whisked off to Edinburgh at the bidding of a son of her hostess, who, she says, was always accustomed to have his will. She did not actually travel north with him, but after a short visit to Miss Nussey, joined his party in the Scottish capital. In the very style of her latest heroine she writes: "I should not in the least fear to go with him to China. I like to see him pleased. I *dis*like to ruffle or disappoint him, so he shall have his mind."

Miss Brontë greatly enjoyed Edinburgh and its neighbourhood. It is to be feared nobody took her for a day's ramble on the Pentlands. Had they done so she must have owned Yorkshire defeated. Nor do we hear anything of a visit to Hopetoun, or Dalmeny, or Newbattle Abbey. But for a first visit Melrose and Abbotsford do well enough.

Miss Brontë's raptures with all she saw were genuine, and were doubtless received by the Scotch folk, who made her acquaintance, with that clear sense of their being no more than the occasion obviously demanded, which sometimes vexes poor Southron bodies, who have been taught that people ought to hearken to their own advantages with blushes and wavings of a deprecating hand.

In the height of her pleasure Miss Brontë even turned her back on London, saying that, as compared with Edinburgh, the former city was as prose to poetry, or as a great rumbling, rambling, heavy epic compared to a lyric, brief, bright, clear, and vital as a flash of lightning.

Alas! poor London. If only those who revile you would pack up their trunks and take single tickets to their favourite cities, lyrical or otherwise, how happy those of us who were left behind might be within thy spacious bounds!

> "Romæ vivimus; illa domus,
> Illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur ætas."

It is very pleasant to notice how greatly Miss Brontë enjoyed this sudden little visit to Edinburgh, and what an enormous capacity for enjoyment she had when in congenial company. The thing she liked even better than Princes Street was the "grand Scotch national character." She was in Scotland just five days.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE inmates of the parsonage were now—Mr. Brontë, an old man of 70, Charlotte, Tabitha the aged, and Martha the infirm. We nurse the ideal, and are always eager to believe that somewhere it is to be found blended with the actual. Husband and wife, parents and children, brother and sister ought, doubtless, to complement each other's existence, and satisfy one another to the finest fibres of their respective natures. Sometimes it so happens, and the blessed tradition takes fresh root amongst us, but it is not always so, nor often.

Charlotte Brontë loved her father with the tenacity and depth of her character. For him, as we know, she made sacrifices without end and without murmur, and never so much as thinking to inquire whether they were sacrifices she ought to have been called upon to make or was right in making. It is well to accept the facts of life without seeking to get behind them, and fathers, it cannot be denied, are facts. In this spirit true blessedness lies. Of people who have a grudge against their parents the world does well to be suspicious. They may have good explanations to offer, but it is

weary work listening to explanations. Mr. Brontë in his turn loved his daughter, as indeed he well might; but he had no notion of putting himself out for her. The only thing of hers he was anxious about was her health, as it existed at the moment he was inquiring after it. Satisfied on his point he went on his way never dreaming that perhaps that way was not conducive to an only daughter's happiness. It is very hard to change life-long habits. He had his way of doing things long before his daughter was thought of. He was a solitary man. He gave his company as Mrs. Gamp took her spirits, when he felt so disposed, but it must be his free gift. He took long walks, but he took them alone, as he had done for forty years, pursuing his own thoughts, possibly even dandling his own delusions—for who can unravel the web of men's follies? He would get home tired with the drooping tiredness of age, and, tongue-tied, go early to bed. His meals he always had by himself, even in the old days when the small house was full of children and service was scanty. His daughter was thus left alone night after night in that grim house by the church which rose amidst its wet tomb-stones, and there she had to sit listening to the wind wailing over the moors, and sobbing at her door like the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw at the windows of "Wuthering Heights."

"Still ailing, Wind? Wilt be appeased or no?
Which needs the other's office, thou or I?
Dost want to be disburthened of a woe,
And can in truth my voice untie
Its links and let it go?

Art thou a dumb, wronged thing that would be righted,
Entrusting thus, thy cause to me? Forbear,
No tongue can mend such pleadings; faith requited
With falsehood, love, at last aware
Of scorn, hopes early blighted.

We have them; but I know not any tone
So fit as thine to falter forth a sorrow;
Dost think men would go mad without a moan,
If they knew any way to borrow
A pathos like thy own?"[1]

Charlotte Brontë borrowed a good deal of pathos from the wild winds which blew about Haworth.

It was a sad and lonely life. We do not need to be told by any friend, biographer, or critic what the author of "Villette" thought of solitude, or how little she was fitted to cope with its terrors, or to repulse its creeping advances. Shy as she was; dreading as she did what she called "meeting people;" nervously susceptible as we are told she was to remarks about her personal appearance, which appearance she condemned with her accustomed unnecessary severity—none the less internally she craved, demanded, companionship. She wanted a full life and she had an empty one—empty, that is, of human beings; for the earth and sky, the moor and the glen, unpeopled of those she loved, were no longer for her a bright theatre for action, but a hot prison of dreary pain. Happiness quite unshared, she cries, has no *taste*. The word is a significant one. The moors once so friendly, so satisfying, so invigorating were so no longer. The heather and the bracken whispered Emily; in the faint blue lines of the horizon she discerned Anne. Like

[1] "James Lee's Wife," by Mr. Browning.

many another memory-tortured sufferer, she thirsted for the cup of oblivion, that she might drink, forget, and be at peace. The last will and testament of a true lover, would (were it possible) be according to Shakespeare's precedent—

> "No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
> Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
> Give warning to the world that I am fled
> From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.
> Nay, if you read this line, remember not
> The hand that writ it; for I love you so
> That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
> If thinking on me then should make you woe.
> O! if (I say) you look upon this verse
> When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
> Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
> But let your love even with my life decay:
> Lest the wise world should look into your moan
> And mock you with me after I have gone."

Then there was Mr. X ("the little man") what was to be done with him? He wanted her to marry him. He was a good man, and kind and substantial withal. She did not altogether like his manners and his customs, or his "dreadful determined nose in the middle of his face." When he came near her, her veins ran ice; but no sooner did he go away than she felt more gently towards him. Men are slow in their conceit to recognize what a valuable ally in their love-making they might make of distance. Mr. X visited Haworth, and Mr. Brontë took to him. "Papa has penetration." But it was not possible. "No! if X be the only husband fate offers

me, single I must always remain. But yet at times I grieve for him."

On being reproached for silence she sadly replies, "I am silent, because I have literally *nothing to say*. I might indeed repeat over and over again that my life is a pale blank and often a very weary burden, and that the future sometimes appals me; but what end could be answered by such repetition, except to weary you and enervate myself. The evils that now and then wring a groan from my heart lie in my position—not that I am a *single* woman and likely to remain a *single* woman—but because I am a lonely woman and likely to be lonely."

"I have not accumulated," she once said, "since I published 'Shirley' what makes it needful for me to speak again, and, till I do, may God give me grace to be dumb." She was, however, accumulating whole stores of bitter herbs out of which was to be extracted her masterpiece, "Villette."

Whenever Charlotte Brontë could avail herself of the frequent opportunities that offered themselves to escape from Haworth for a time, she was glad to do so, or at all events, if glad be too strong a word, she was less averse to go than to stay. To be able to live at home was long her dream. It was now within her power, but under hard conditions. We often, perhaps generally, get the thing we want, but seldom in the way we wanted it, and herein lies the difference.

In the August of 1850 she first met her biographer, Mrs. Gaskell, herself a novelist of rare excellence and rich in the quality Currer Bell was most deficient in, true humour and playfulness. The meeting occurred at

Briery Close, a house high above Lowood, on Windermere, then occupied by Sir James Kay Shuttleworth. Mrs. Gaskell, writing at the time to a friend, describes Miss Brontë as "thin, and more than half a head shorter than I am, soft brown hair, not very dark, eyes (very good and expressive, looking straight and open at you) of the same colour as her hair, a large mouth, the forehead square, broad, and rather overhanging. She has a very sweet voice, rather hesitates in choosing her expressions, but when chosen they seem without an effort admirable, and just befitting the occasion; there is nothing overstrained, but perfectly simple. She told me about Father Newman's lectures at the Oratory in a very quiet, concise, graphic way." Had Miss Brontë heard one of these lectures? They were not published till the following year. The observations of so sound a Protestant on these seductive and charming utterances of the most humane of theologians would have great interest. Cardinal Newman, like all good men, is a novel reader, and has given evidence of his familiarity with the works of Mrs. Gaskell, but I should fear his judgment upon the author of "Jane Eyre," "Shirley," and "Villette," though I doubt not it would be tempered with mercy.

She was taken drives about the Lake district, and saw what can be seen of it from a carriage, but she was far too true a daughter of the moors not to know that this was not much, and she was ever longing to run away unseen and wander by herself on the hills and up the dales.

During this same year she edited a new edition of "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey," and introduced

them to a larger circle of readers, with the short biographical sketch of her two sisters so widely known. It is indeed a beautiful bit of writing—sincere, grave, controlled, yet tingling with emotion.

It must have been, we know it was, heart-rending work revising, transcribing, correcting the tales of her dead sisters in the room in which she had first heard them read by their authors. Old Saunders Mucklebackit in Sir Walter's "Antiquary," trying hard with his dim eyes and quivering hands to repair the old boat which had just drowned his son Steenie, is perhaps as pathetic a figure as is to be found even amongst the works of that great master; and somehow it has turned up in my mind as I think of Charlotte Brontë fixing her short-sighted gaze upon the pages of "Wuthering Heights." We have her own word for it that the labour left her "prostrate and entombed."

Her publishers generously kept her well supplied with books, which she read and criticised in her serious fashion. Dr. Arnold's Life was a fountain of pleasure to her. A life so unlike her own could hardly fail to please. His happiness most struck her. "One feels thankful," she wrote, "to know that it has been permitted to any man to live such a life."

Early in 1851 she paid a visit to Miss Martineau, at Ambleside, and seems to have enjoyed herself. She relished her tyrannical little hostess inexpressibly, and described her most admirably. "She is a great and good woman, of course not without peculiarities, but I have seen none as yet that annoy me. She is both hard and warm-hearted, abrupt and affectionate, liberal and des-

potic. I believe she is not at all conscious of her own absolutism. When I tell her of it she denies the charge warmly; then I laugh at her."

It was during this visit that she made the acquaintance of Dr. Arnold's family, one of whom has left a record of their meeting in the lines called "Haworth Churchyard," written in April, 1855. Miss Brontë, we may be sure, remembering with what undying gratitude she repaid Sydney Dobell his appreciation of "Wuthering Heights," would most have thanked the poet for the tribute he took occasion to pay to the memory of her sister Emily.

"And she
(How shall I sing her?) whose soul
Knew no fellow for might,
Passion, vehemence, grief,
Daring, since Byron died,
That world-famed son of fire—she, who sank
Baffled, unknown, self-consumed;
Whose too bold dying song
Shook, like a clarion blast, my soul.

Sleep, O cluster of friends,
Sleep! or only when May,
Brought by the west wind, returns
Back to your native heaths,
And the plover is heard on the moors,
Yearly awake to behold
The opening summer, the sky,
The shining moorland—to hear
The drowsy bee, as of old,
Hum o'er the thyme; the grouse
Call from the heather in bloom!
Sleep, or only for this
Break your united repose!"

This year saw the publication of the work of Miss Martineau and her *fidus Achates*, Mr. Atkinson, which so fluttered the orthodox dovecotes, and was thought by the authors to be a deadly thrust at men's silly hankerings after Immortality. No one could possibly have less intellectual sympathy with the letters on the "Nature and Development of Man" than Miss Brontë, who had no turn for such speculations even had they been more worthy of consideration than these particular ones. The world was dim and dark enough for her without blowing any more lights out. Still she was not one to be bullied out of her friendships by the world's harsh cries, and she was faithful to the little despot of Ambleside, recognizing her entire sincerity. They were to quarrel afterwards, but not about the nature of man.

1851 was, and will, I suppose, always remain the Great Exhibition Year, when to come to London assumed the familiar aspect of a plain duty. Miss Brontë accordingly came with a black satin dress, a white mantle, and a bonnet, about which she had "grave doubts." "Tabby, Martha, and Papa"—for on such a subject this was the order of precedence—all thought she was going to be married,—and the last-named observed one day, in the tones of a man who had pondered the matter, that did she do so he would give up housekeeping and go into lodgings. To London she went, but not to be married. Haworth, after all, contained her destined lord.

Thackeray's lectures on the English Humourists were then to be heard. She went to the second, on Congreve and Addison, in Willis's Rooms, "a great painted and gilded saloon with long sofas for benches." She was

the observed of all observers. Those two eminent Yorkshiremen, Lord Carlisle and Mr. Milnes—the latter, the "incomparable Richard" of Carlyle and the Lord Houghton of the peerage—besought introductions to their famous countrywoman. Mr. Reid tells us they were neither of them particularly impressed. They thought her a decided oddity. It was probably Lord Houghton who urged Mr. Reid not to forget this, and to have the courage to state it. But Charlotte Brontë was not a woman to be studied at bay. She was no stalwart Amazon, no Madame de Staël, to knock down folly as it stands, or throw epigrams across a dinner table; but behind cover she was no mean markswoman, and in a *tête-à-tête* could thrust a dart better than many a more formidable looking person. The lecture over Mr. Thackeray descended from his platform, and making his way up to her, asked her straight out how she liked it? This charming little trait of character, and the reflections it gave rise to, are suitably recorded in "Villette," where, as Mrs. Gaskell reminds us, a similar action of M. Paul Emanuel's is related. But Miss Brontë understood M. Paul Emanuel better than she did Mr. Thackeray.

The day after the lecture she went to the Crystal Palace, and on Sunday she heard D'Aubigné preach. "It was pleasant," she said, "half sweet, half sad, and strangely suggestive to hear the French language once more."

By the end of June she was back at Haworth, and busy with her new story, which was to be her last.

CHAPTER XIV.

BY the end of November, 1852, "Villette" was finished. It was published on the 24th of January, 1853, being held back a short while in order to give Mrs. Gaskell's "Ruth," a very different damsel, a good start.

Miss Martineau made it a matter of objection to "Villette," and indeed to all Miss Brontë's writings, that she represented love as the whole concern of women's lives. Her heroines, said Miss Martineau, love too readily, too vehemently, and sometimes after a fashion their female readers may resent. She further observes that passion occupies too prominent a place in Miss Brontë's pictures of life. There may be truth in these objections. Life is a tangled skein, and who is to say what colour of thread predominates? Outside novels, people do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves, and it is therefore impossible to tell what precise part love has played in the lives of our contemporaries. Sometimes she appears as "leading lady," and sometimes as only "second waiting woman"; but in one capacity or another, she is seldom long off the stage.

All Miss Brontë's heroines start with the most valour-

ous resolutions to forswear love and all her works. With the fore-doomed hero in "Maud," they exclaim—

> "And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
> The honey of poison-flowers, and all the measureless ill."

To support them in this stern resolve, this self-denying ordinance, they are for ever invoking the aid of a heartless philosophy peculiar to themselves, and pulling, most unflinchingly, the string of a veritable shower-bath of unwelcome and half-frozen truths. Lucy Snowe, or Frost as her creator first called her, subjects herself to this treatment until she becomes "a faded hollow-eyed vision." Does hope ever revive within her shivering breast, she bids it jump down as one might a muddy dog.

"'And will Graham really write?' I questioned, as I sank tired on the edge of the bed.

"Reason, coming stealthily up to me through the twilight of that long, dim chamber, whispered sedately—

"'He may write once. So kind is his nature, it may stimulate him for once to make the effort. But it *cannot* be continued—it *may* not be repeated. Great were that folly which should build on such a promise—insane that credulity which should mistake the transitory rain-pool, holding in its hollow one draught, for the perennial spring yielding the supply of seasons.'

"I bent my head: I sat thinking an hour longer. Reason still whispered me, laying on my shoulder a withered

hand, and frostily touching my ear with the chill blue lips of eld.

"'If,' muttered she, 'if he *should* write, what then? Do you meditate pleasure in replying? Ah, fool! I warn you! Brief be your answer. Hope no delight of heart—no indulgence of intellect: grant no expansion of feeling—give holiday to no single faculty: dally with no friendly exchange: foster no genial intercommunion . . . .'

"'But I have talked to Graham and you did not chide,' I pleaded.

"'No,' said she, 'I needed not. Talk for you is good discipline. You converse imperfectly. While you speak, there can be no oblivion of inferiority—no encouragement to delusion: pain, privation, penury stamp your language . . . .'

"'But,' I again broke in, 'where the bodily presence is weak and the speech contemptible, surely there cannot be error in making written language the medium of better utterance than faltering lips can achieve?'

"Reason only answered: 'At your peril you cherish that idea, or suffer its influence to animate any writing of yours!'

"'But if I feel, may I *never* express?'

"'*Never!*' declared Reason."

But the treatment fails, and Lucy, following in the footsteps of Jane and Caroline, falls madly in love with the first gentleman she meets. In Lucy's case this happens to be the redoubtable and excellent Dr. John. Upon this surgeon are lavished pages of gorgeous hue. Hardly

before, and never since, has that featherless biped—that forked radish—man, been so shone upon. He positively glitters like the golden prince in Kensington Gardens when the sun is shining. He is quite unconscious of it, and does not so much as blink. The magic spell of Miss Brontë's writing, here seen at its very best, is so strongly upon us whilst we read, we live so completely in Lucy's life, and so ardently share her feelings, are so swept away by her impetuous rhetoric, and dazzled by her splendid imagery — in which the author shows herself a true countrywoman of Burke's—that we are scarcely able to stop to cast so much as a glance of our own upon the *causa causans* of all this commotion and tossing of the mind. When we do, it is difficult not to have a little sympathy with Miss Martineau. Fancy that admirable lady reading, perhaps at six o'clock in the morning, for she was, as became a political economist, an early riser, the following passage:—

"'Child as I was,' remarked Paulina, 'I wonder how I dared be so venturous. To me he seems now all sacred, his locks are inaccessible, and, Lucy, I feel a sort of fear when I look at his firm, marble chin, at his straight Greek features. Women are called beautiful, Lucy; he is not like a woman, therefore I suppose he is not beautiful, but what is he, then? Do other people see him with my eyes? Do *you* admire him?'

"'I'll tell you what I do, Paulina,' was once my answer to her many questions. "*I never see him*. I looked at him twice or thrice about a year ago, before he recognized me, and then I shut my eyes; and if he were to cross

their balls twelve times between each day's sunset and sunrise, except from memory, I should hardly know what shape had gone by.'

"'Lucy, what do you mean?' said she, under her breath.

"'I mean that I value vision, and dread being struck stone blind.' It was best to answer her strongly at once, and to silence for ever the tender, passionate confidences which left her lips sweet honey, and sometimes dropped in my ear—molten lead. To me, she commented no more on her lover's beauty."

And indeed it was time she stopped. It is only fair to add that, a few pages later on, the sober-minded reader is comforted out of the mouth of Paulina's father, who, speaking of Dr. John, exclaims: "Off with him to Siberia, red whiskers and all. I say, I don't like him, Polly, and I wonder that you should."

"Villette" is, in the judgment of some good critics, the best of the three novels. It is certainly not so unpractised as "Jane Eyre," and it has none of the roughness and scrappiness of "Shirley." From first to last the reader feels himself in the hands of a mistress of her craft.

On the other hand, there are those who find the juxtaposition of Dr. John and Paul Emanuel, in Lucy's mind, distasteful, and who shrink from such a passage as the following, which occurs at the very end of the novel, and is written of Dr. John—

"I kept a place for him, too; a place of which I never

took the measure either by rule or compass. I think it was like the tent of Peri Banou. All my life-long I carried it folded in the hollow of my hand, yet released from that hold and constriction, I know not but its innate capacity for expanse might have magnified it into a tabernacle for a host."

There is doubtless something morbid about this. It is the language of unfulfilled desire—of a celibate. We may feel tolerably certain that had Paul Emanuel returned home again—as anywhere out of a novel he would have done—and married Lucy Snowe, in a short time the doctor's tent would have shrunk into very small proportions, and after a couple of years have disappeared altogether. Nor is there anything in this view necessarily flattering to Paul Emanuel.

Miss Brontë's style is certainly seen at its best in "Villette." Pruned of some of its earlier excrescences, it has yet lost nothing, in the process, of its glorious vigour or of its strange power of forcing the reader's mind into the bidden mood.

Lucy draws near Villette—

"Of an artistic temperament, I deny that I am; yet I must possess something of the artist's faculty of making the most of present pleasure: that is to say, when it is of the kind to my taste. I enjoyed that day, though we travelled slowly, though it was cold, though it rained. Somewhat bare, flat, and treeless was the route along which our journey lay; and slimy canals crept, like half-torpid green snakes, beside the road; and formal pollard

willows edged level fields, tilled like kitchen-garden beds. The sky, too, was monotonously gray; the atmosphere was stagnant and humid; yet amidst all these deadening influences, my fancy budded fresh and my heart basked in sunshine. These feelings, however, were well kept in check by the secret but ceaseless consciousness of anxiety lying in wait on enjoyment, like a tiger crouched in a jungle. The breathing of that beast of prey was in my ear always; his fierce heart panted close against mine; he never stirred in his lair, but I felt him: I knew he waited only for sun-down to bound ravenous from his ambush."

She describes Madame Beck—

"As Madame Beck ruled by espionage, she of course had her staff of spies: she perfectly knew the quality of the tools she used, and while she would not scruple to handle the dirtiest for a dirty occasion—flinging this sort from her like refuse rind, after the orange has been duly squeezed—I have known her fastidious in seeking pure metal for clean uses; and when once a bloodless and rustless instrument was found, she was careful of the prize, keeping it in silk and cotton-wool. Yet, woe be to that man or woman who relied on her one inch beyond the point where it was her interest to be trustworthy: interest was the master-key of Madame's nature—the mainspring of her motives—the alpha and omega of her life. I have seen her *feelings* appealed to, and I have smiled in half-pity, half-scorn at the appellants. None ever gained her ear through that channel, or swayed her

purpose by that means. On the contrary, to attempt to touch her heart was the surest way to rouse her antipathy, and to make of her a secret foe. It proved to her that she had no heart to be touched: it reminded her where she was impotent and dead. Never was the distinction between charity and mercy better exemplified than in her. While devoid of sympathy, she had a sufficiency of rational benevolence: she would give in the readiest manner to people she had never seen—rather, however, to classes than to individuals. *Pour les pauvres*, she opened her purse freely—against *the poor man*, as a rule, she kept it closed. In philanthropic schemes for the benefit of society at large she took a cheerful part; no private sorrow touched her: no force or mass of suffering concentrated in one heart had power to pierce hers. Not the agony in Gethsemane, not the death on Calvary, could have wrung from her eyes one tear."

In the next quotation she might be speaking of Charlotte Brontë as truly as of herself—

"Could I but have spoken in my own tongue, I felt as if I might have gained a hearing; for, in the first place, though I knew I looked a poor creature, and in many respects actually was so, yet nature had given me a voice that could make itself heard, if lifted in excitement or deepened by emotion. In the second place, while I had no flow, only a hesitating trickle of language, in ordinary circumstances, yet—under stimulus such as was now rife through the mutinous mass—I could, in English, have rolled out readily phrases stigmatizing

their proceedings as such proceedings deserved to be stigmatized; and then with some sarcasm, flavoured with contemptuous bitterness for the ringleaders, and relieved with easy banter for the weaker but less knavish followers, it seemed to me that one might possibly get command over this wild herd and bring them into training, at least. All I could now do was to walk up to Blanche—Mademoiselle de Melcy, a young baronne—the eldest, tallest, handsomest, and most vicious—stand before her desk, take from under her hand her exercise book, remount the estrade, deliberately read the composition, which I found very stupid, and, as deliberately, and in the face of the whole school, tear the blotted page in two."

The horrors of solitude are nowhere depicted with greater fidelity than in "Villette"—

"One evening—and I was not delirious: I was in my sane mind, I got up—I dressed myself, weak and shaking. The solitude and the stillness of the long dormitory could not be borne any longer; the ghastly white beds were turning into spectres—the coronal of each became a death's head, huge and sun-bleached—dead dreams of an elder world and mightier race lay frozen in their wide gaping eye-holes. That evening more firmly than ever fastened into my soul the conviction that Fate was of stone, and Hope a false idol—blind, bloodless, and of granite core. I felt, too, that the trial God had appointed me was gaining its climax, and must now be turned by my own hands, hot, feeble, trembling as they were. It

rained still, and blew; but with more clemency, I thought, than it had poured and raged all day. Twilight was falling, and I deemed its influence pitiful; from the lattice I saw coming night-clouds trailing low like banners drooping. It seemed to me that at this hour there was affection and sorrow in Heaven above for all pain suffered on earth beneath; the weight of my dreadful dream became alleviated—that insufferable thought of being no more loved—no more owned, half-yielded to hope of the contrary—I was sure this hope would shine clearer if I got out from under this house-roof, which was crushing as the slab of a tomb, and went outside the city to a certain quiet hill, a long way distant in the fields. Covered with a cloak (I could not be delirious, for I had sense and recollection to put on warm clothing), forth I set. The bells of a church arrested me in passing; they seemed to call me in to the *salut*, and I went in. Any solemn rite, any spectacle of sincere worship, any opening for appeal to God was as welcome to me then as bread to one in extremity of want. I knelt down with others on the stone pavement. It was an old solemn church, its pervading gloom not gilded, but purpled by light shed through stained glass."

Passages, too, there are of splendid rhetoric De Quincey might father without shame. Impassioned prose is not for all markets. Mr. Swinburne says he does not like it; but then, Mr. Swinburne, with his poetical wares to dispose of, is not quite a disinterested party. Those of us who are only buyers of pleasure are glad to encounter in our pursuit such writing as the following—

"Oh, lovers of power! Oh, mitred aspirants for this world's kingdoms! an hour will come, even to you, when it will be well for your hearts—pausing faint at each broken beat—that there is a Mercy beyond human compassions, a Love stronger than this strong death which even you must face, and before it, fall; a Charity more potent than any sin, even yours; a Pity which redeems worlds—nay, absolves Priests."

Lucy Snowe is a dubious heroine over whom raptures are happily not demanded; but, like her whole sisterhood, she has a noble courage and a true English heart, which in these superfine days when it is thought vulgar to care about your country and foolish to suppose it better than anybody else's, goes for something. What a charming incident it is, when she, tortured by M. Paul's diatribe, "Sullying the shield of Britannia and dabbling the Union Jack in the mud," at last struck a sharp stroke on the desk, opened her lips and let loose this cry—

"Vive l'Angleterre, l'Histoire et les Héros! A bas la France, la Fiction et les Faquins."

But of course, M. Paul is to "Villette" what the Madonna di San Sisto is to the Dresden Gallery—its pride, its joy, its unique possession. The fierce little man! the "sallow tiger"! Well has he been compared with Don Quixote and my Uncle Toby. Doubtless when so compared he can make no pretence to terms of equality. Indeed, it was a bold comparison. The Knight of La Mancha and Mr. Shandy's brother are part and parcel of humanity. Great achievements which must ever count on our side. You may dig holes in them,

if you are so minded, but it will make no difference. Were half-a-dozen tourists to perish to-morrow on Ben Mac Dhui, the mountain air would be none the less sweet next long vacation. Charlotte Brontë's hero is not of their calibre, but he is one of the next of kin. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his remarks about M. Paul, points out the limitations of Miss Brontë's art. He says we all know and love Uncle Toby (would it were so !), but he adds, we feel quite sure no such man ever existed save in Sterne's brain ! Whereas of Paul Emanuel, "We feel that he is a real human being, who gave lectures at a particular date in a pension at Brussels." It is impossible to quarrel with this criticism, but though M. Paul may have had an actual counterfeit, the original was a long way back in Miss Brontë's life experience. It is a memory picture—hence in its mellowness, its idealization, it approaches a true creation. When we compare it with Dr. John, whose counterfeit was close at hand, we perceive the advantages of distance. M. Paul rises mysteriously from the depths of his author's mind, and brings with him tokens of what had so long been his romantic resting-place, whereas the doctor apart from Lucy Snowe's rhapsodies about him, does but bob up and down the surface like a painted cork. This perhaps explains how Lucy, the beloved of Paul, could still cherish as she so undoubtedly does the image of him whom Ginevra, in her pique, styled "Æsculapius." In reality, the doctor and the professor were never on the stage together and the former was the later of the two, and in possession of the boards at the time of writing.

On the whole, the actuality of M. Paul is not very

obtrusive, and perhaps were we in that state of ignorance which we ought to be about artists' lives we should not be so astute, as we are, to perceive that it must be a portrait. Indeed, some good critics there are who stick to it that in his heart of hearts Paul Emanuel was a woman.

Miss Brontë though no humourist was, as her intimate friends well knew, a capital "quiz," and in "Villette" we have some fair specimens of her skill. Ginevra and her lover with his "engaging titter" are made excellent fun of, and the former is a first-rate study.

And yet Mr. Reid tells us people have left off reading "Villette." If so they must surely have access to some fairy library whose shelves contain all the novels that might have been but never were written. Mr. Mudie's young men can offer them nothing better.

CHAPTER XV.

MANY writing women have had literary followings of greater or less brilliance—if not their Mussets and Chopins, their salons and slaves, after French fashions, at all events Sunday afternoons and the chatter of their coteries. But Charlotte Brontë had none of these things. Her days were mostly spent at Haworth, with, or rather by, her father, attending to the house and the parish, teaching, visiting, and so on. Her evenings were passed alone in the room whose floor her sisters had restlessly paced in the days when the future was still to them "a dark seed-plot." Here she sat, and wrote late, or what seemed late, into the night, till the wild winds, moaning with memories, drove her to bed. Then, after or before the publication of a book, which to her meant so much, but was to the world but one book more, she would come up to London for a week or a fortnight to be taken about to see men and women and other sights. For these last-mentioned things she had a quick eye, though how far they gave her actual pleasure it is hard to say, so prompt were her feelings, so fierce her self-restraint; but that she always carried back with her into the West Riding much matter for reflection and treatment is

certain. When, for example, we read that on such and such a day she visited the Crystal Palace, and remember what use she has made in "Villette" of the theatre, the picture-gallery, and the fête, it is not difficult to imagine how the familiar words, usually evoking but the huge cylinders—hated of Ruskin—might have stood as the title of a fascinating chapter in the novel that was never written by the author of "Jane Eyre."

The autumn of 1851 was spent, as has been already mentioned, at home and in ill-health. She was indeed very ill and low-spirited. Early in 1852 she was favoured with a copy of "Esmond," which she read with that mixture of love and rage our great satirist so frequently inspires in his gentle readers. "As usual," she exclaims, "he is unjust to women, quite unjust. There is hardly any punishment he does not deserve for making Lady Castlewood peep through a keyhole, listen at a door, and be jealous of a boy and a milkmaid. Many other things I noticed that for my part grieved and exasperated me as I read; but then again came passages so true, so deeply thought, so tenderly felt, one could not help forgiving and admiring."[1] Poor Lady Castlewood! it takes a man to forgive her.

Certainly one would have thought that the storms of Miss Brontë's life were over—that though the future might, and probably would, hold hours of depression, sadness, ill-health, yet that it would not actively try her by the strife of contending duties and unfulfilled desires. But it is never wise to underrate the capacity of the future to be disagreeable. Miss Brontë had a lover in the village,

[1] G., 385.

Mr. Nicholls, her father's curate, the Mr. McCarthy mentioned at the very end of "Shirley"—"a grave, reserved, conscientious man, with a deep sense of religion." He loved her deeply—not as the author of three of the most striking novels ever written, for he was no judge of these things, and knew nothing of the artist's life, but as the clergyman's daughter, the most helpful, the most sensible, the most dignified woman in the parish. Miss Brontë's feelings towards curates had doubtless undergone much abatement since the days of her youth; besides which, Mr. Nicholls was gravity itself, and, Irishman though he was, not in the least like the Reverend Peter Malone. She was well-disposed towards him, and though he had been in love with her for years before the possibility of such a thing occurred to her, yet, when he made his wishes known, she so far consented as to tell him he should have her answer on the morrow. This occurred one evening in December, 1852. But they were both reckoning without their host. Old Mr. Brontë would have none of it, and behaved, indeed, as only old men who have never learnt their lessons can behave. His age and manifold infirmities alike forbad argument, remonstrance, or disobedience. There was nothing for it but to give in. Poor Mr. Nicholls had to go away, and the incumbent of Haworth openly exulted thereat, and never mentioned his name in his daughter's hearing save in terms of insult. Miss Brontë took refuge for awhile in London, where she visited Newgate and Pentonville Prisons, the Bank, the Exchange, the Foundling and Bethlehem Hospitals, and other sombre places round which her powerful imagination could play. She had

other troubles, too, at this time. "Villette" was published, and Miss Martineau took occasion to give expression to the opinions already referred to. They led to something like a rupture.

Haworth must on her return have been indeed distasteful to her—the man who loved her, and whom she was willing to love, driven out of the place by her father, whose welfare she had now alone to consider. The old room must have been lonelier than ever.

> "How dreary 'tis for women to sit still
> On winter nights by solitary fires
> And hear the nations praising them far off,
> Too far! ay, praising our quick sense of love,
> Our very heart of passionate womanhood
> Which could not beat so in the verse unless
> Being present also in the unkissed lips,
> And eyes undried because there's none to ask
> The reason they grew moist."[1]

However, in the month of March of this drear year (1853), their bishop visited them, and slept under the parsonage roof. His lordship, so Mrs. Gaskell was assured, "was agreeably impressed with the gentle, unassuming manners of his hostess, and with the perfect propriety and consistency of the arrangements of the modest household." Dr. Longley, that oft-translated man, who passed Ripon, Durham, and York on his way to Canterbury and Heaven, was evidently, like most bishops, a diligent reader of *The Quarterly Review*, and would seem, to judge from his solemn assurances, to have gone

[1] "Aurora Leigh."

to Haworth with some misgivings lest his tea should be poured out for him by a cross-legged virago who would attempt to bully him in his own diocese and in the house of one of his inferior clergy.

In August Miss Brontë suffered a keen disappointment. Her heart was ever drawn to Scotland, and she actually, in company with friends, had crossed the border, and was in the country of the "great magician," when, owing to the illness, real or imaginary, of one of the party, a baby, they all had to come back again, and leave unvisited scenes whose images, shrined in the faithful memory,

> "Heighten joy
> And cheer the mind in sorrow."

And all on account of a baby.

Miss Brontë, writing on the subject to her old friend, Miss Wooler, feeling sure, I suppose, of sympathy, has something to say about that baby, and about babies in general, which may be read in Mr. Reid's book, but not in these pages.

Suddenly Mr. Brontë withdrew all objection to his daughter's marriage with Mr. Nicholls, and became anxious to hurry it on; and accordingly it took place at Haworth Church on the 29th of June, 1854. The old gentleman would not himself go to the church, for some unaccountable, and doubtless bad, reason, so his daughter was given away by Miss Wooler, Miss Nussey being the only bridesmaid, and a neighbouring divine (who, I hope, was not in any of the novels) the officiating clergyman. The ceremony over, the bride and bridegroom set off for Ireland, not, however, to County Down

to find out about the Pruntys, but to the more romantic south—Killarney and so forth.

After their return they took up their abode along with Mr. Brontë in the old parsonage, which once again seemed as if it might be a true home. The remaining months of the life of her whom we have no longer any business to call Miss Brontë were, until illness destroyed enjoyment, peaceful and happy. She found herself wanted, and, like the true woman she ever was, she liked being wanted. Her husband was a clergyman before everything else, and expected his wife to be a clergyman's wife; and she took her place accordingly. "My dear Arthur is a very practical as well as a very punctual, methodical man. Every morning he is in the National School by nine o'clock." The evenings were no longer solitary, and though Mrs. Nicholls did begin another story, bearing—surely only provisionally—the already appropriated title of "Emma," it is not very easy to see where the time was to be found to be absorbed in novel-writing. But this difficulty was not destined to press upon Charlotte Brontë. Before the year 1855 had advanced far she fell ill, became weaker and weaker, and on the 31st of March she died at Haworth, the last surviving child of Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell.

The old parsonage had seen many changes since the day, in February, 1820, when the new incumbent, his ailing wife, and six young children, had taken possession of it, and for the next six years it was to be the home of the two clergymen—the father who had lost his children and the husband who had lost his wife. Curious as was the tie between them, stormy as had been their

relations, and different as were their tempers and habits of mind and body, they got on very well, and continued to live together till Mr. Brontë's death, which happened on the 7th of June, 1861, he being then eighty-four years old. After this, Mr. Nicholls, being disappointed of the incumbency of Haworth, returned to his native Ireland.

Charlotte Brontë died in the plenitude of her literary powers. Those three periods so inevitable in long-lived authors, the early, the middle, and the later, are not noticeable in her case. In fact, her style was but full-grown when the pen was snatched from her hand. Styles unfortunately wear out. Even Thackeray's, easy and delightful as it ever is, had grown somewhat dilapidated by the time he wrote "Lovel the Widower." That, had she lived, she would, husband or no husband, have written other novels cannot be doubted, but what sort of novels they would have been, and how they would have compared with "Jane Eyre" and "Villette," are problems best solved in our dreams or when we lie betwixt sleeping and waking, and should not be attempted in sober earnest on the dull printed page.

Sorrowfully sudden as her end was, perhaps it was not unkind. Her life had been a sad one. It is idle to pretend otherwise. One hardly knows at what entrance sorrow was shut out. She never knew her mother; her father was far more a trial than a comfort; all her life through she must have been full of dread for him as to what he might do or become; her only brother died a drunkard and disgraced; her sisters' lives were tortured by poverty and dependence, and they died young, joyless, and disappointed. Nor did Love ever

smile upon her life; its agitations she knew and all "its thwarting currents of desire," but never was she allowed to dwell in the

> "Fair house of joy and bliss
> Where truest pleasure is."

For those who have led the lives of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë rest is best.

> "They are at rest:
> We may not stir the heaven of their repose
> By rude invoking voice, or prayer addrest
> In waywardness to those
> Who in the mountain grots of Eden lie
> And hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.
>
> They hear it sweep
> In distance down the dark and savage vale;
> But they at rocky bed, or current deep,
> Shall never more grow pale;
> They hear, and meekly muse, as fain to know
> How long, untired, unspent, that giant stream shall flow." [1]

[1] "Lyra Apostolica," J. H. Newman.

CHAPTER XVI.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, in his preface to the collected tales of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe—the good lady who curdled our grandmothers and made them creep—assures us that so great was the excitement created by the publication of the "Mysteries of Udolpho" that "when a family was numerous the volumes flew, and were sometimes torn, from hand to hand, and the complaints of those whose studies were thus interrupted were a general tribute to the genius of the author."

Novels now-a-days are received somewhat more coldly even in circles of sensibility, and though it would be rash to assert that never again will the earth witness the shameful sight of the members of one family fighting for the physical possession of what Mr. Mudie calls "Works of Fiction," it is not likely to be one of frequent occurrence. The most popular author must now be content with the applause of his readers, and dispense with the "general tribute" Sir Walter refers to, which was paid in the sighs and groans of those whose studies were interrupted by rapine and violence.

Familiarity with the article has bred some measure of contempt. In simpler times novels were to the general

reader what the red-coats were to Miss Lydia Bennet, rare and stimulating things, worth walking miles to catch sight of; but now, when they weekly take the field in squadrons, it cannot be expected that anybody should turn out to see them march past.

The part played by women in this great manufactory is an interesting subject, and by no means an unpleasant one. In most provinces of work women have been, and in many they still are, very badly treated, but here they have nothing to complain of, save, of course, the proverbial stupidity of the "gentle reader." Male authors have not combined against them, or boycotted publishers who publish for them. The publishers themselves have never sought to beat them down on account of their womanhood. It was never suggested that George Eliot ought to be paid less than Mr. Wilkie Collins because she was a woman. Their literary path has really been made easy for them, and the few unkind things that have been said about them have mostly proceeded from their old cronies, the clergy, who did not like seeing them setting up for themselves. How pleasantly Miss Burney made her *debût*; how almost hilariously was her advent hailed! With what chivalrous enthusiasm did Johnson and Burke and Gibbon crown her with laurel from their own brows. Miss Edgeworth and Miss Austen had no professional jealousies to contend with, and never felt the creeping paralysis born of a sneer. The generous Sir Walter lavished praises upon them and their works. Himself, *jure divino*, the king of the craft, he adopted them into his race, and sealed them of his tribe. He always talks to us, said one of his poor neighbours, "as if we

were his blood relations," and what the man was that was the author. Jealousy, subtlest of human infirmities—

> "It's always ringing in your ears
> They call this man as good as me,"

never entered the manly habitation of Sir Walter's mind. He writes in his diary:

"Also read again, for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of 'Pride and Prejudice.' That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, feelings, and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow Wow strain I can do myself, like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the sentiments is denied to me."

And again:

"Edgeworth, Ferrier, Austen, have all given portraits of real society far superior to anything man, vain man, has produced of the like nature."

I wonder whether woman, vain woman, would, under similar circumstances, have written with equal cordiality of her rivals. Miss Ferrier, who was a great favourite of Scott, had an easy time of it, and her three novels, "Destiny," "Marriage," and "The Inheritance," still number good intellects, and have recently been republished in almost too handsome a guise. Nothing

certainly ever interfered with George Eliot's novel-writing career. Like the Roman Empire, she ran her course. Charlotte Brontë, perhaps, fared the worst, and yet her literary life, as compared with her individual life, was bright and happy.

The respective values of the goods turned out from their rival manufactories will be best determined by Time. Anything like an uniformity of taste is to be deprecated, and it is to be hoped that free and independent readers will never pay respect to any chair of criticism, however well endowed, save so far as its canons are of a constructive character, and teach them, not how to sneer at small authors, but how to admire great ones. Intense as is my affection for the memory of Lord Macaulay, I think he did wrong to make such cruel fun of "Satan" Montgomery. Poor Satan!

> "I'm wae to think upon yon den
> E'en for your sake."

Why should the thousands of decent people who liked Montgomery's "Turkey-carpet style of writing," and who read his poetry because they liked it, have been frightened out of their likings by the stormy ridicule of a mighty rhetorician? When they laid down the "Omnipresence of the Deity" they did not take up "Paradise Lost." They simply read no more that day, or perhaps for many days, and became duller and stupider in consequence. It is idle to talk about the duty of detecting literary impostors. We need be under no apprehension on that score. Old Father Time does his

own weeding, and does it more effectually, though with less obvious ferocity, than did Lord Macaulay the hoeing up of dandelions on the lawn at Holly Lodge. Macaulay writes :

"I thought that I was rid of the villains, but the day before yesterday, when I got up and looked out of my window, I could see five or six of their great, impudent, flaring, yellow faces turned up at me. 'Only you wait till I come down,' I said. How I grubbed them up ! How I enjoyed their destruction !"

But why should poor poets and bad authors be prematurely grubbed up, and grudged any little fame they can scrape together during their lives ? It was not their fault people liked them better than their betters. Who now reads Cleaveland ? and yet he was once dubbed "Prince of Poets," and so great was his fame, even worse poetry than his was palmed off upon a greedy public as the production of his exquisite wit. He gave pleasure in his own day, and harms nobody now, for the last of the very numerous editions of his verse bears date 1699. He certainly is not "equalled in renown" with "blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides," or yet with his contemporary, blind John Milton. The fact is, Time has grubbed up John Cleaveland, Prince of Poets, and cast him into the ash-bin. But he was a good man—most bad poets are (*see* Johnson's "Lives")—and a tutor of St. John's College, Cambridge.

It is never pleasant to hear some cowardly fellow joining in a laugh at Mr. Tupper when you know quite

well he would much prefer the "Proverbial Philosophy" to "Sordello," or "In Memoriam," or "Empedocles on Etna," or "Atalanta in Calydon." These latter poems indeed he will never read; the former he would have read in the copy his maiden aunt gave him, only he is ashamed to open it. Extol the great authors if you will, but leave the small ones alone. It is easier to teach the mob to throw a brick-bat at a fool than to worship at the shrine of a saint, but it is a lesson not worth the teaching.

The only excuse for this plea for the prevention of cruelty to the lower authors is its obvious sincerity. I have a personal objection to brick-bats.

Charlotte Brontë had no fancy for Miss Austen's novels, which Mr. Lewes somewhat dictatorially told her she *must* like. With proper spirit she replied, Why? and as good as said, "I won't."

Reading Miss Austen's novels would not be so delightful as it is to her sworn followers were every one bound under penalties to profess an equal pleasure in them. When a devotee takes up "Mansfield Park" and reads:

"About thirty years ago Miss Maria Ward, of Huntingdon, with only seven thousand pounds, had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet's lady, with all the comforts and consequences of a large house and a large income. All Huntingdon exclaimed on the greatness of the match, and her uncle, the lawyer, himself allowed

her to be at least three thousand pounds short of any equitable claim to it;"

or opens "Pride and Prejudice" at the place where Mr. Collins is telling Elizabeth Bennet his reasons for proposing to her:

"First, I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—which, perhaps, I ought to have mentioned earlier—it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on the subject, and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford, between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss De Bourgh's footstool, that she said, 'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly; choose a gentlewoman, for *my* sake and for your *own;* let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can; bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.'"

When I say the lover of Miss Austen reads these well-known passages the smile of satisfaction, betraying the deep inward peace they never fail to beget, widens, like "a circle in the water," as he remembers (and he is

careful always to remember) how his dearest friend, who has been so successful in life, can no more read Miss Austen than he can the Moabitish Stone. Literature would be a poor thing did we all love alike.

Some people can only read the novels of a very limited number of authors, others can read almost anything. The late Bishop Thirlwall, who was an enormous novel reader, only once got stuck—"The Wide, Wide World" beat him; he could *not* get through it. He was greatly annoyed, but the fact was so. And yet "The Wide, Wide World" had many readers, and is certainly better than "Queechy."

It would hardly be safe to name Miss Austen, Miss Brontë, and George Eliot as the three greatest women novelists the United Kingdom can boast, and were one to go on and say that the alphabetical order of their names is also the order of merit, it would be necessary to seek police protection, and yet surely it is so.

The test of merit for a novel can be nothing else than the strength and probable endurance of its pleasure-giving capacity. As M. Guizot once observed, unless a book is readable it will not be read. To be read always, everywhere, and by all is the impossible ideal. Who fails least is the greatest novelist. A member of the craft may fairly enough pray in aid of his immortality, his learning, his philosophy, his width of range, his depth of passion, his height of feeling, his humour, his style, or any mortal thing he can think of; but unless his novels give pleasure, and are likely to go on giving pleasure, his grave is dug, and sooner or later, probably sooner, will be occupied by another dead novelist.

Applying this test, we ask—What pleasure-giving elements do Miss Austen's novels now possess which they will not possess a century hence? None! If they please now, they will please then, unless in the meantime some catastrophe occurs to human nature, which shall rob the poor thing of the satisfaction she has always hitherto found in contemplating her own visage. Faiths, fashions, thrones, parliaments, late dinners, may all fade away; we may go forward, we may go back; recall political economy from Saturn, or Mr. Henry George from New York; crown Mr. Parnell King of Ireland, or hang him high as Haman; but fat Mary Bennet, the elder Miss Bates, Mr. Rushworth, and Mr. John Thorpe must always remain within call, being not accidental, but essential figures.

Lord Macaulay's eulogy in *The Edinburgh Review* on Miss Austen in general, and her clergy in particular, is well known:

"They are all specimens of the upper part of the middle class. They have all been liberally educated. They all lie under the restraints of the same sacred profession. They are all young. They are all in love. Not one of them has any hobby-horse, to use the phrase of Sterne. Not one has a ruling passion such as we read of in Pope. Who would not have expected them to be insipid likenesses of each other? No such thing! Harpagon is not more unlike to Jourdain; Joseph Surface is not more unlike to Sir Lucius O'Trigger, than every one of Miss Austen's young divines to all his reverend brethren."

It is not, however, so well known that Archbishop Whately had twenty years earlier in *The Quarterly Review* paid just the same compliment in much the same style to Miss Austen's fools. Macaulay found himself compelled to compare the lady with Shakespeare, and to say that none had approached nearer to the manner of the great master; but the prelate's praise was not only prior in point of time, but more discriminating when he said, that Miss Austen conducts her conversations with a regard to character hardly exceeded even by Shakespeare himself. He then proceeds: "Like him she shows as admirable a discrimination in the character of fools as of people of sense; a merit which is far from common. . . . Slender and Shallow and Ague-cheek as Shakespeare has painted them, though equally fools, resemble one another no more than Richard and Macbeth, and Julius Cæsar; and Miss Austen's Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Rushworth and Miss Bates are no more alike than her Darcy, Knightley and Edward Bertram."

It is, however, a grave mistake to confine the range of Miss Austen's powers to exquisite discrimination of character and the revelation of character through casual and unforced conversation. She, too, can portray the passions of the human breast. She does not exactly make them surge, but they flutter very nicely. The love of poor little Fanny Price for Edward Bertram is beautifully depicted. The before-quoted archbishop is eloquent on the tale of this love so long unrequited, and employs a language not inapplicable to "Villette":

"The silence in which this passion is cherished, the

slender hopes and enjoyments by which it is fed, the restlessness and jealousy with which it fills a mind naturally active, contented, and unsuspicious, the manner in which it tinges every event and every reflection, are painted with a vividness and a detail of which we can scarcely conceive any one but a female, and, we should add, a female writing from recollection, capable." [1]

It is a little unexpected to find Miss Austen, now accounted somewhat cold, supposed to have written of love with a vividness that must be autobiographical. But the critic's surmise was not a fair one. When "a male" writes a novel with love in it, as males not unfrequently do, it is not customary for a critic to say that the author writes as no one but a male, and a male writing from recollection was capable of doing, and why should women be treated differently in this respect? There is nothing finer even in Thackeray than the passion of Pendennis for the Fotheringay, but the criticism would have been as bad as the manners which asserted that the author must have written it from memory. Anyhow, it is surprising to find an archbishop, or one who at all events was to become an archbishop, countenancing so vile a phrase as "a female," and repeating it twice in a line.

It is not possible in the case of Charlotte Brontë's novels to feel the same confidence as about Miss Austen's. In fact, time has already told upon them. Yet being love-stories at once truthful and passionate, why should they

[1] For the whole article see Walter Scott's Prose Works, vol. xviii., where it is included by mistake. See Lockhart's Life, vol. v., p. 158.

not share the immortality of "Clarissa Harlowe"? If they do ever cease to give pleasure it can only be by reason of something repellent, or at least non-communicative, in their tone. They have a marked tone, and it is a tone of some asperity. Sir Philip Sidney says in one of his sonnets that his mouth was too tender for the hard bit of virtue; Charlotte Brontë's disciplined spirit rejoiced in the stern rigour of the bit, but perhaps the harsh training deprived her literary workmanship of some of those graces and charms which the world, always fond of a light touch, does not willingly let die. This severity and occasional harshness of tone and even temper are elements of danger, and compel us to give the elder novelist precedence over the younger. Miss Austen's temper is perfect.

The splendid achievements of George Eliot, the pictures she has drawn of social life, her Aunt Gleggs and Pullets, her parish clerks and veterinary surgeons, her local auctioneers and country attorneys, her old men and young children, are too fresh in our memories to enable us to form any opinion as to how her novels are likely to make good their demand upon the attention of an entirely new generation of readers,

> " Thundering and bursting
> In torrents and waves,
> Carolling and shouting
> Over tombs, amid graves.'

If these hasty and impetuous persons could only be persuaded to begin at the beginning instead of the end

and read about Shepperton and little Dicky Hackett and that charming parson Mr. Ely, "who threw himself with a sense of relief into his easiest chair, and in this attitude of bachelor enjoyment began to read Bishop Jebbs' Memoirs," we might bid our fears begone. What the effect of "Deronda" may be upon "Amos Barton," or of "Middlemarch" upon "Silas Marner" it is impossible to say. Certainly one cannot feel hopeful about these later works. What St. Ambrose said about men's salvation may also be said about their pleasures—it did not please God to provide them *in dialectica*. Novels are supposed to treat of life, and life refuses to be jargonized. However, with these rocks ahead, it seems impossible but to adhere to the classification I am not bold enough to repeat.

Mr. Swinburne in his delightful Note on Charlotte Brontë exhibits a little of what I may call the "grubbing up" spirit of Lord Macaulay, and looks forward to the good time when "darkness everlasting" shall have fallen upon some popular favourites whom he names. I have not the spirits to join in this exultation. For, after all, these popular favourites who have served us a good turn before now, will be trodden under foot only to make room for writers no whit their superiors, but for the possession of what Wordsworth called the "irritation of novelty." The last-named great poet in his supplementary preface had the courage to point out that bad poetry is as immortal as good, the difference between the two being that the immortality of the good is the immortality of the individual, whilst in the other case it is only the species that is immortal. We do not, for

example, to-day read Cleaveland and Flatman, bad poets of old, but we do read Herbert and Milton good poets of the same date. None the less do we read the Cleavelands and Flatmen of our own time. One may surely avow a kindly preference for the bad authors one knows and sees basking in their prosperity, over those who will make their fortunes "far on in summers that we shall not see."

The future of the novel cannot be predicted and had better not be attempted. There is a ridiculous fashion nowadays for persons who have written books which happen to have interested a certain number of idle readers, gravely to sit down and write either an account of how they came to write such invaluable works, or a disquisition upon the art which they practice. Such proceedings lead these worthy authors to exaggerate their own importance by causing them to dwell too exclusively upon their own productions.

M. Zola has written some books of which the critics of the future will have to take account; but he has not made his position better, but worse, by attempting to publish the philosophy of his method. It became quite hard for an Englishman, who cannot fancy what his life would have been without "Pickwick" and "Pendennis," to do justice to Mr. W. D. Howells, after that author had made public his banalities about Dickens and Thackeray. And now it appears from a recent number of *The Contemporary Review* that the author of "She" has ideas about fiction. It is a wide world, my masters, and you had better be writing what you write best and leave us, your readers, alone to seek our pleasure where we can find it. The world will certainly not

reject the work of any writer because his book ought not to have been written according to the theory of another.

The office of literature is to please; and to attain a place amongst the pleasure-givers is no small reward for hard work or even bitter sorrow. High amongst those to whom we owe gratitude, and happily can pay respect, stands the name of Charlotte Brontë.

THE END.

INDEX.

A.

Ahaderg, County Down, Birthplace of Patrick Prunty, 15
Arnold, Dr., Life of, 143
Arnold, Mr. Matthew, Lines on the Brontës, 144
Austen, Jane, 169, 173–8

B.

Bachelors, How to behave in the presence of, 85
Branwell, Miss Maria, marries Patrick Brontë, 24 ; dies, 25
Branwell, Miss, sister of the above, comes to Haworth, 31 ; Charlotte Brontë's letter to, 74 ; dies, 81
Brontë, Anne, 65, 67, 81, 84, 87 ; her writings, 92 ; her death, 120
Brontë, Branwell, 55, 86, 119
Brontë, Charlotte, born at Thornton, 25 ; is taken to Haworth, 26 ; expresses an opinion about the Bible, 34 ; goes to Cowan's Bridge School, 39 ; is removed, 40 ; commences author, 43 ; chooses the Isle of Wight, 44 ; writes the history of the year 1829, 45 ; the Catholic Question and the Duke, 47 ; personally described, 48, 49 ; goes to Roehead School, 49 ; her gifts and acquirements, 50 ; listens to Miss Wooler's stories, 51 ; schooldays end, 51 ; her reading and her advice to Miss Nussey on books, 52, 53 ; the passion for London, 53 ; becomes a teacher at Roehead, 56 ; writes to Southey, 61 ; correspondence with him, 62–4 ; "St. John" proposes marriage and is refused, 66, 67 ; becomes a governess, 68 ; returns home and refuses an Irish curate, 69 ; begins a story, 71 ; reads forty French novels, 72 ; becomes a governess again, 72 ; unhappy in her remarks about children, 73 ; school-keeping projects, 73–7 ; goes to M. Heger's at Brussels, 77 ; remarks about "Villette," 78 ; returns to Brussels against

her conscience, 81 ; unhappy, 82 ; returns to Haworth, 83 ; poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, 87 ; "The Professor" goes its rounds, 94 ; first glimpse of "Jane Eyre," 96 ; is unsympathetic towards curates, 97 ; "Jane Eyre" accepted and published, 98–9 ; goes to London with Anne, 118 ; "Shirley" begun and published, 122 ; "Shirley" lets out the secret of authorship, 132 ; visits London and meets Thackeray, 133 ; again visits London, 134 ; visits Edinburgh, 135 ; lonely life at Haworth, 138 ; Mr. X wants to marry her, 140 ; meets Mrs. Gaskell, 141 ; edits "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey," 142, 143 ; goes to London, 145 ; hears Thackeray lecture, 146 ; reads "Esmond," 161 ; Mr. Nicholls proposes marriage, but her father refuses, 162 ; again visits London, 162 ; receives a visit from the Bishop of Ripon, 163 ; journey to Scotland spoilt by a baby, 164 ; marriage, 164 ; death, 165

Brontë, Elizabeth, born, 25 ; answers a question, 34 ; goes to school, dies, 39

Brontë, Emily, born, 25 ; answers a question, 34 ; goes to school, 39 ; chooses the Isle of Arran, 44 ; goes to Roehead, 56 ; returns home, 57 ; her love of the moors and of liberty, 57 ; studies German and kneads dough, 58 ; reticence about religion, 60 ; goes to M. Heger's, 76 ; love of argument, 79 ; poems, 90 ; "Wuthering Heights," 116 ; dies, 119, 120

Brontë, Maria, born, 25 ; answers a question, 34 ; conversational powers, 35 ; unhappy at Cowan's Bridge, 37 ; dies, 39

Brontë, Patrick, born, 15 ; keeps a school, 16 ; tutor to Mr. Tighe's family, goes to Cambridge, 16 ; drills side by side with Lord Palmerston, takes his degree and holy orders, becomes a curate at Wethersfield, 17 ; falls in love with Miss Burder, 20 ; is secret about his parentage, 21 ; leaves Wethersfield, 22 ; after death of his wife proposes again to Miss Burder but is refused, 23 ; marries Miss Branwell, 24 ; his temper, 25 ; an author and a poet, 30 ; his talents, 31 ; his account of his children, 33 ; suffers from cataract, 95 ; left alone with Charlotte, 137 ; his violence, 162 ; his death, 166

Brussels, Life at, 79–83

Burder, Miss Mary Mildred, 20, 22, 23

Burney, Miss, 169

C.

Cowan's Bridge School, 36–40

D.

Donne, Rev. Mr., 123, 124

E.

Edgeworth, Miss, 169, 170
Edinburgh, 135
Edinburgh Review, 130
Eliot, George, 124, 169, 179

F.

Ferrier, Miss, 170

G.

Gaskell, Mrs., 5, 141

H.

Hartshead, 24
Haworth moors, 26
Heger, M., 76, 79, 80, 82

I.

"Islanders," The, 44

J.

"Jane Eyre," First glimpse of, 96; published, 99; significance of, 100; sex of author doubted, 101; *The Quarterly* Reviewer, 102, 108–114; a great deal of Charlotte Brontë in Jane, 103–4; energy the crowning merit of, 105; quotations from, 105–111
Johnson, Dr., 85

L.

Lewes, Mr. G. H., 100, 107, 130, 173
London, Love for, 53, 54, 135
Longley, Dr., 163

M.

Macaulay, Lord, 171, 176
Martineau, Miss, 143, 145, 147

N.

Newman, Cardinal, 142, 167
Nicholls, Mr., 97, 162, 164, 166
Nussey, Miss, 49, 52, 53, 135, 164

P.

Palmerston, Lord, 17
Poems, 87–93
"Professor," The, 94, 95, 98

Q.

Quarterly Review on "Jane Eyre," 108–114

R.

Radcliffe, Mrs. Ann, 168
Rochester, Mr., 102, 107
Roehead, 49, 56

S.

Scott, Sir Walter, 143, 168–170
"Shirley," published, 123; an open-air book, 124; quotations from, 125–8; reviewed in *The Times* and in *The Edinburgh Review*, 130; told the secret of its authorship, 132
Southey, 61–5
Stephen, Mr. Leslie, 38, 103, 158
Swinburne, Mr., 67, 156, 180

T.

Tabitha, 42, 65, 137, 145
Tighe, Rev. Mr., 16

Whitworth College
Spokane, Wn.

Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë meets, 133; scolds, 134, 135; hears lecture, 145; reads "Esmond," 161
Thirlwall, Bishop, could not read "The Wide Wide World," 175
Thornton, 24, 25

V.

"Villette" published, 147; Miss Martineau's objections, 147; quotations from, 148–157; M. Paul Emanuel, 157; Dr. John, 150; how far autobiographical, 77

W.

Wellington, Duke of, Charlotte Brontë's hero, 43, 46; she sees him, 134
Wethersfield, 17, 18
Whately, Archbishop, on Miss Austen, 177
Wooler, Miss, 49, 51, 164
Wordsworth on bad poetry, 180
"Wuthering Heights," 94, 97, 116, 143

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

BY

JOHN P. ANDERSON

(British Museum.)

I. WORKS.

II. APPENDIX—

Biography, Criticism, etc.

Magazine Articles.

III. CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WORKS.

I. WORKS.

Life and Works of Charlotte Brontë and her Sisters. (Life by Mrs. Gaskell.) An illustrated edition, in seven vols. London, 1872-3, 8vo.

Vol. i., *Jane Eyre;* vol. ii., *Shirley;* vol. iii., *Villette;* vol. iv., *The Professor* and *Poems* which include the *Cottage Poems* by the Rev. Patrick Brontë; vol. v., *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey;* vol. vi., *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall;* vol. vii., *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, by Mrs. Gaskell.

Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell [*i.e.* Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë]. London, 1846, 16mo.

——Another edition. Philadelphia, 1848, 16mo.

Jane Eyre. An Autobiography. By Currer Bell. 3 vols. London, 1847, 8vo.

Jane Eyre. Second edition. 3 vols. London, 1848, 8vo.

——Third edition. 3 vols. London, 1848, 8vo.

——Fourth edition. London, 1850, 8vo.

——Fifth edition. London, 1855, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1857, 8vo.

——Haworth Edition. [Illustrated]. 2 vols. Philadelphia, 1884, 8vo.

Shirley, a Tale. 3 vols. London, 1849, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1853, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1860, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1862, 8vo.

Villette. 3 vols. London, 1853, 8vo.

Villette. Another edition. London, 1855, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1858, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1860, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1862, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1879, 12mo.

The Professor, a Tale. 2 vols. London, 1857, 8vo.

——Another edition (*Tauchnitz Collection*, vol. 404). Leipzig, 1857, 16mo.

——Another edition. To which are added poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. London, 1860, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1862, 8vo.

Wuthering Heights, and Agnes Grey, by Ellis and Acton Bell. A new edition revised, with a biographical notice of the authors, a selection from their literary remains, and a preface, by Currer Bell [*i.e.* Charlotte Brontë]. London, 1850, 12mo.

Emma (a fragment of a Story by the late C. B. Preceded by a short notice by W. M. T. *i.e.*, W. M. Thackeray, entitled *The Last Sketch*, in vol. i., 1860, of the "Cornhill Magazine," pp. 485-498).

An hour with C. B.; or flowers from a Yorkshire moor. [Selections from C. B.'s writings and correspondence, with a biographical sketch.] By Laura C. Holloway. New York [1883], 8vo.

II. APPENDIX.

Biography, Criticism, etc.

Adams, W. H. Davenport. — Women of Fashion and Representative Women in Letters and Society. 2 vols. London, 1878, 8vo.

Charlotte Brontë, vol. ii., pp. 265-342.

——Celebrated Englishwomen of the Victorian Era. 2 vols. London, 1884, 8vo.

Charlotte Brontë, vol. i., pp. 119-188.

——Child-life and Girlhood of Remarkable Women. Second edition. London, 1885, 8vo.

Charlotte Brontë, pp. 57-77.

Arnold, Matthew — Poems of Matthew Arnold. Lyric and Elegiac Poems. London, 1885, 8vo.

Haworth Churchyard: April, 1855. Originally appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, vol. li., 1855, pp. 527-530.

Bayne, Peter. — Essays in Biography and Criticism. Boston, 1857, 8vo.

Ellis, Acton, and Currer Bell, First Series, pp. 392-426.

——Two Great Englishwomen, Mrs. Browning and Charlotte Brontë, etc. London, 1881, 8vo.

Charlotte Brontë and her Sisters, pp. 157-340; originally appeared in the *Literary World*.

Brontë, C.—The Parting. Ballad written by Currer Bell [*i. e.* C. Brontë]. Begins "There's no use in weeping," Music by J. E. Field. London, 1853, fol.

——Love and Friendship.—Song, the poetry by C. Brontë. The music by Einna. London, 1879, fol.

Brougham, John.—Jane Eyre. A drama in five acts, adapted from C. Brontë's novel. (*French's*

American Drama, No. 136.) New York [1869], 12mo.

Chambers, Robert.— Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature, etc. Third edition. 2 vols. London, 1876, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë, vol. ii., pp. 531-533.

Clark, F. L.—Golden Friendships, etc. London, 1884, 8vo.
The Brontës and their Friends, pp. 123-159.

Dobell, Sydney—The Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell. 2 vols. London, 1878, 8vo.
Correspondence with Miss Brontë, 1851, vol. i., pp. 209-222.

Eyre, Jane.—Et Vaisenhuusbarn. Fløkecomedie med Sang i 4 Akter [and in prose]. Efter en fri Bearbeidelse af Romanen "Jane Eyre" [by C. Brontë]. Kjøbenhavn, 1859, 8vo.

Essays.—English Essays. Hamburg, 1869, 12mo.
Charlotte Brontë, vol. i., pp. 137-168. Reprinted from the *North American Review*, October 1857.

Gaskell, E. C. — The Life of Charlotte Brontë. 2 vols. London, 1857, 12mo.

——Second edition. 2 vols. London, 1857, 8vo.

——Third edition, revised and corrected. 2 vols. London, 1857, 8vo.

——Another edition. London, 1858, 8vo.

——Another edition. (*Tauchnitz Collection of British Authors*, vols. 384, 385.) Leipzig, 1859, 16mo.

Grundy, Francis H,—Pictures of the Past. London, 1879, 8vo.
Patrick Branwell Brontë, pp. 73-93.

Holroyd, Abraham.—A Garland of Poetry by Yorkshire Authors, or relating to Yorkshire. Saltaire, 1873, 16mo.
"On the Death of Currer Bell" (three verses), by Benjamin Preston, 1857, p. 23.

Kinsley, William W.—Views on Vexed Questions. Philadelphia, 1881, 8vo,
The Brontë Sisters, pp. 303-380.

Leyland, Francis A.—The Brontë Family, with special reference to Patrick Branwell Brontë. 2 vols. London, 1886, 8vo.

McCarthy, Justin—A History of Our Own Times. 4 vols. London, 1882, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë, vol. ii., pp. 259-261,

Martineau, Harriet. — Biographical Sketches, 1852-1875. Fourth edition. London, 1876, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë ("Currer Bell"), pp. 360-366.

Men.—Eminent Men and Popular Books. From "The Times." London, 1859, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë, pp. 185-206.

Michély, R. — L'Orfanella di Lowood. Dramma, etc. [Founded on "Jane Eyre," by C. B.] Napoli, 1874, 8vo.

Montégut, Émile. — Écrivains Modernes de l'Angleterre. Première Série. Paris, 1885, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë. Portrait Général. First Series, pp. 183-354.

Morley, Henry. — Of English Literature in the reign of Victoria, etc. (Tauchnitz edition, vol. 2000.) Leipzig, 1881, 12mo.
The Brontës, pp. 386-389.

P., W. P.—Jottings on Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell [*i.e.*, C., E., and A. Brontë]. By W. P. P. London, 1856, 8vo.

Reid, T. Wemyss. — Charlotte Brontë. A Monograph, by T.

W. R. With illustrations. London, 1877, 8vo.

Robinson, A. Mary F.—Emily Brontë (*Eminent Women Series*). London, 1883, 8vo.

Roscoe, William Caldwell. — Poems and Essays by the late William C. Roscoe. 2 vols. London, 1860, 8vo.
The Miss Brontës, vol. ii. [July, 1857], pp. 309-353.

Selden, Camille, *pseud.*—L'Esprit des Femmes de notre temps. Paris, 1865, 12mo.
Charlotte Brontë et la Vie Morale en Angleterre, pp. 83-218.

Shepheard, Henry.—A Vindication of the Clergy Daughters' School and of the Rev. W. Carus Wilson, from the Remarks in the "Life of Charlotte Brontë" [by Mrs. E. C. Gaskell]. Kirkby Lonsdale, 1857, 8vo.

Skelton, John.—Essays in history and biography, etc. Edinburgh, 1883, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë, pp. 296-311; appeared originally in *Fraser's Magazine*.

Smith, George Barnett.—Poets and Novelists. A series of literary studies. London, 1875, 8vo.
The Brontës, pp. 209-250. Reprinted from the *Cornhill Magazine*.

Stephen, Leslie. — Hours in a Library. London, 1879, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë, third series, pp. 325-364.

——Dictionary of National Biography. London, 1886, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë, by Leslie Stephen, vol. vi., pp. 406-413.

Swinburne, Algernon Charles.—A Note on Charlotte Brontë. London, 1877, 8vo.

Turner, Joseph Horsfall.—Haworth, Past and Present. Brighouse, 1879, 8vo.

Women.—Fifty Famous Women, etc. London, 1879, 8vo.
Charlotte Brontë, pp. 249-255.

Ward and Lock.—Ward and Lock's Penny Books for the People. The life of Charlotte Brontë. London [1882], 8vo.

MAGAZINE ARTICLES.

Brontë, Charlotte. — Catholic World, by G. Cerny, vol. 3, 1866, pp. 836-841.—Hours at Home, by R. W. Gilder, vol. 11, 1870, pp. 183-187.—Galaxy, by A. B. Harris, vol. 24, p. 41, etc.—Macmillan's Magazine, by T. W. Reid, vol. 34, 1876, pp. 385-401 and 481-499; same article, Littell's Living Age, vol. 130, 1876, pp. 801-816, and vol. 131, pp. 289-306, 611-627, also Eclectic Magazine, vol. 24, N.S., pp. 699-715, and vol. 25, N.S., pp. 83-97, 192-212.—Fraser's Magazine, by J. Skelton, vol. 55, 1857, pp. 569-582; same article, Eclectic Magazine, vol. 41, pp. 532-545.—Cornhill Magazine, by Leslie Stephen, vol. 36, 1877, pp. 723-739; same article, Eclectic Magazine, vol. 90, pp. 178-189, and Littell's Living Age, vol. 136, pp. 23-34. — Cornhill Magazine, by W. M. Thackeray (a short paper signed W. M. T., prefixed to Emma, a fragment of a story by the late Charlotte Brontë), vol. 1, 1860, pp. 485-498.—American Presbyterian Review, by B. J. Wallace, vol. 6, p. 285, etc.—Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 82, 1857, pp. 77-94.—British Quarterly Review, vol. 26,

Brontë, Charlotte.
1857, pp. 218-231; same article, with portrait after Richmond, Eclectic Magazine, vol. 42, pp. 145-153.—Littell's Living Age, vol. 45, 1855, pp. 396-397.—National Review, vol. 5, 1857, pp. 127-164; same article, Littell's Living Age, vol. 54, 1857, pp. 577-598.—Literary World, by Peter Bayne, vol. 21, N.S., 1880, pp. 232-234, 248-250, 264-266, 281-283, 296-298, 312-314, 328-330, 344-346, 360. 362, 376-378, 392-394, 406-408 - vol. 22, N.S., 1880, pp. 8-10; 24-26.—Saturday Review, vol, 3, 1857, pp. 313, 314.—Mirror, on Branwell Brontë, by January Searle (G. S. Phillips), Dec 28, 1872, pp. 278, 279.—Englishwomen's Domestic Magazine, vol. 2, 3rd series, pp. 136-140, 165-169; vol. 26, 3rd series, pp. 159-164 and 214-217.—National Magazine, vol 13, p. 548, etc. — Harper's New Monthly Magazine, vol. 11, 1855, p. 128.—Unsere Zeit, by Leopold Katscher, Bd. 2, 1880, pp. 734-752. — Palladium, by Sydney Dobell Sept. 1850, pp. 161-175; afterwards reprinted in his Life and Letters, vol. i, 1878.

——*and Jane Austen.* Modern Review, by A. Arnitt, vol. 3, 1882, pp. 384-396.

——*and Thackeray.* Oxford and Cambridge Magazine, 1856, pp. 323-335.

——*Birthplace of.* Canadian Monthly, by Georgiana M. Craik, vol. 9, 1876, pp. 264-267; same article, Eclectic Magazine, vol. 23, N.S., pp. 183-186.

——*The Brontës.* Cornhill Magazine, by George B. Smith, vol. 28, 1873, pp. 54-71; same article, Eclectic Magazine, vol. 18, N.S., pp. 287-299; Littell's Living Age, vol. 118, pp. 307-318, and Every Saturday, vol. 15, p. 97, etc.

——*The Brontës and their Home.* Broadway, vol. 3, 3rd series, 1871, pp. 23-30; same article, Putnam's Magazine, vol. 6, N.S., pp. 278-286.

——*The Brontë Sisters.* Lakeside, by W. W. Kinsley, vol. 1, 1869, pp. 154-157.

——*Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell.* Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 22, 2nd series, 1855, pp. 416-423. — Ladies' Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 4, N.S., pp. 433-445.

——*Gaskell's Life of.* American Church Monthly, vol. 2, p. 113, etc.—Christian Observer, vol. 57, 1857, pp. 487-490.—New Monthly Magazine, vol. 110, 1857, pp. 317-335. — Littell's Living Age, vol. 53, 1857, pp. 385-402 and 777-780; vol. 55, pp. 385-421.—Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 24, N.S., 1857, pp. 292-295. — Fraser's Magazine, by J. Skelton, vol. 55, 1857, pp. 569-582, reprinted in 1883; same article, Eclectic Magazine, vol. 41, pp. 532-545.

——*Her Lucy Snowe.* Harper's New Monthly Magazine, by Susan M. Waring, vol. 32, 1865, pp. 368-371.

——*Jane Eyre.* North American Review, vol. 67, 1848, pp. 354-357.—North British Review, vol. 11, 1849, pp. 475-493.—Westminster Review, vol. 48, 1848, pp. 581-584. — Fraser's

Brontë, Charlotte.
Magazine, by G. H. Lewes, vol. 36, 1847, pp. 690-694. — Christian Remembrancer, vol. 15, N. S., 1848, pp. 396-409; same article, Littell's Living Age, vol. 17, 1848, pp. 481-487.—Dublin Review, vol. 28, 1850, pp. 209-233.—Dublin University Magazine, vol. 31, 1848, pp. 608-614. — Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 15, N.S., 1848, pp. 346-348.—Revue des Deux Mondes, by Eugène Forcade, tom. 24, Série 5, 1848, pp. 470-494.—Spectator, Nov. 6. 1847, pp. 1074, 1075.

——*Jane Eyre and the Rev. F. W. Robinson.* American Church Review, by G. G. Hepburne, vol. 28, 1876, pp. 252-260.

——*Jane Eyre and Vanity Fair.* Quarterly Review, vol. 84, 1849, pp. 153-185; same article, Littell's Living Age, vol. 20, pp. 497-511.

——*Life of.* Christian Remembrancer, vol. 34, N.S., 1857, pp. 87-145. — New Quarterly Review, vol. 6, 1857, pp. 222-228.—Eclectic Review, vol. 1, N.S., 1857, pp. 630-642.—Westminster Review, vol. 53, N.S., 1878, pp. 34-56.

——*On the Yorkshire Hills about Haworth.* Temple Bar, vol. 19, 1867, pp. 428-432.

——*Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell.* Spectator, Nov. 11, pp. 1094, 1095.

——*The Professor.* Dublin University Magazine, vol. 50, 1857, pp. 88-100. — Littell's Living Age, vol. 54, pp. 680-683.

Brontë, Charlotte.
——*Reminiscences of.* Illustrated. Scribner's Monthly, vol. 2, 1871, pp. 18-31.

——*Shirley.* Edinburgh Review, vol. 91, 1850, pp. 153-173; same article, Littell's Living Age, vol. 24, pp. 481-489.—Littell's Living Age, vol. 23, 1849, pp. 535, 536, (reprinted from the *Examiner.*) — Westminster Review, vol. 52, 1850, p. 418, 419.—Eclectic Review, vol. 26, N.S., 1849, pp. 739-749.—Dublin University Magazine, vol. 34, 1849, pp. 680-689.—Dublin Review, vol. 28, 1850, pp. 209-233.—Athenæum, Nov. 3, 1849, pp. 1107-1109.—Spectator, Nov. 3, 1849, pp. 1043-1045.

——*Unpublished Letters of.* Hours at Home, vol. 11, 1870, pp. 101-110.

——*Villette.* Putnam's Monthly Magazine, vol. 1, 1853, pp. 535-539.—University Quarterly, by W. W. Kinsley, vol. 2. p. 233, etc.—Edinburgh Review, vol. 97, 1853, pp. 380-390.—Christian Remembrancer, vol. 25, N.S., 1853, pp. 401-443.—Eclectic Review, vol. 5, N.S., 1853, pp. 305-320.—Westminster Review, vol. 3, N.S., 1853, pp. 474-491.—New Quarterly Review, vol. 2, 1853, pp. 237-240.—Littell's Living Age, vol. 36, 1853, pp. 588-592.—Athenæum, Feb. 12, 1853, pp. 186-188.—Spectator, Feb. 12, 1853, pp. 155, 156.

——*Visit to Home of.* Monthly Religious Magazine, vol. 31, p. 41, etc.—Hours at Home, by J. D. Sherwood, vol. 5, pp. 243-245.

Brontë, Charlotte.
——*Visit to her School at Brussels.* Scribner's Monthly, vol. 3, 1871, pp. 186-188.

——*Winter's Day at Haworth.* St. James's Magazine, by W. H. Cooke, vol. 21, 1868, pp. 161-171.—Chambers's Journal, 1868, fourth series, pp. 124-128.

——*Writings.* North American Review, by Mrs. M. J. Sweat, vol. 85, 1857, pp. 293-329.—New Monthly Magazine, vol. 95, 1852, pp. 295-305; same article, Littell's Living Age, vol. 34, pp. 417-422.—Hogg's Instructor, vol. 4, N.S., 1855, pp. 425-436; same article, Eclectic Magazine, vol. 35, 1855, pp. 407-418, and Littell's Living Age, vol. 45, pp. 723-732.

III.—CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WORKS.

Poems by C., E., and A. Bell	1846
Jane Eyre	1847
Shirley	1849
Biographical Notice of her Sisters, and Preface prefixed to "Wuthering Heights," with a Selection from their Works .	1850
Villette	1853
The Professor . . .	1857
Emma: a fragment (*Cornhill Magazine*, April 1860)	1860

S0-BGI-485